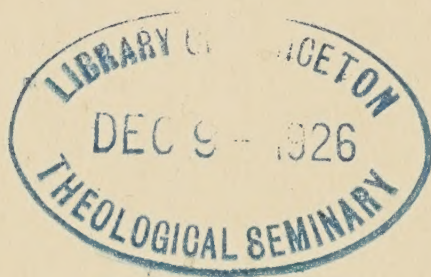


ADVENTURES AND  
CONFESSIONS

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WILLIAM LYON PHELPS





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Adventures and confessions



## BY WILLIAM LYON PHELPS

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ADVENTURES AND CONFESSIONS  
HUMAN NATURE IN THE BIBLE  
HUMAN NATURE AND THE GOSPEL  
AS I LIKE IT, FIRST, SECOND, THIRD SERIES  
ESSAYS ON MODERN NOVELISTS  
ESSAYS ON RUSSIAN NOVELISTS  
ESSAYS ON MODERN DRAMATISTS  
ESSAYS ON BOOKS  
READING THE BIBLE  
TEACHING IN SCHOOL AND COLLEGE  
THE ADVANCE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL  
THE ADVANCE OF ENGLISH POETRY  
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THEATRE  
ARCHIBALD MARSHALL  
SOME MAKERS OF AMERICAN LITERATURE  
HOWELLS, JAMES, BRYANT, AND OTHER ESSAYS  
THE BEGINNINGS OF THE ENGLISH ROMANTIC MOVEMENT

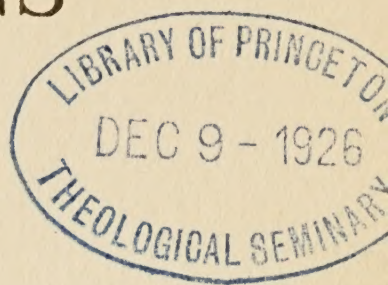


ADVENTURES AND  
CONFESSIONS





# ADVENTURES AND CONFESSIONS



BY  
WILLIAM LYON PHELPS ✓  
LAMPSON PROFESSOR OF ENGLISH LITERATURE AT YALE

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1926

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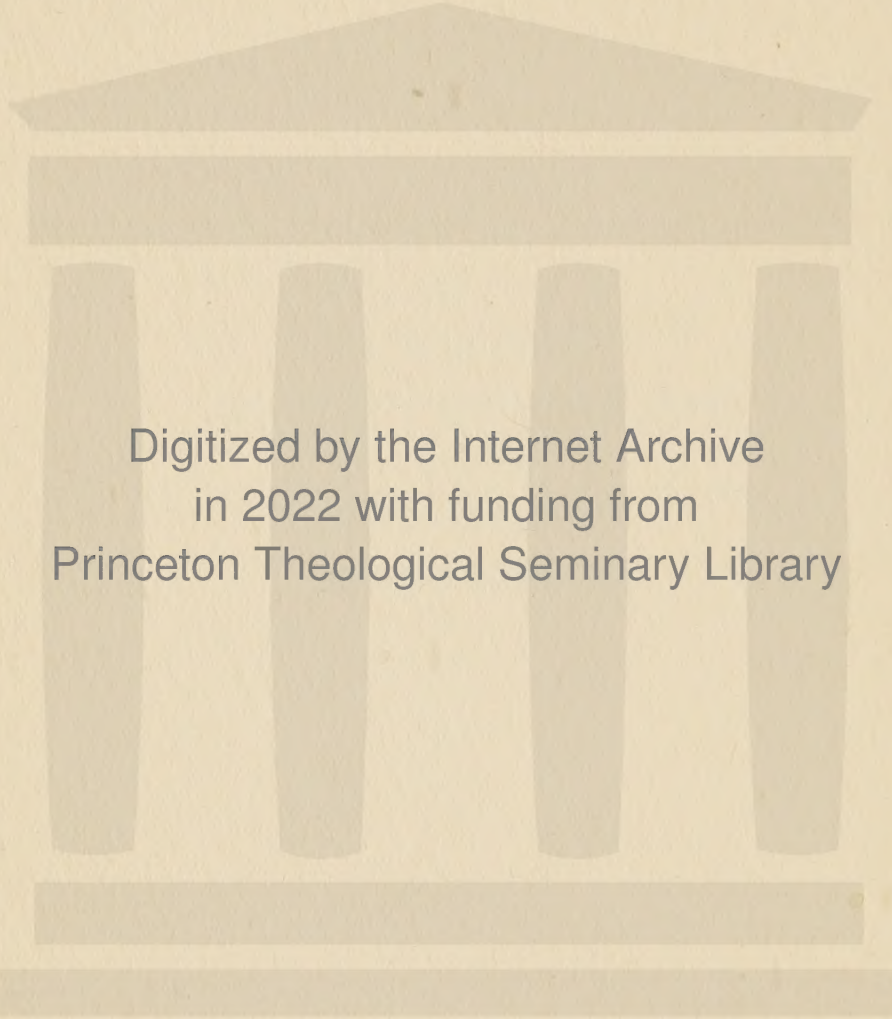
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## PREFACE

This book is called "Adventures and Confessions" because I regard religious faith, when founded on reason, as primarily an adventure; and although the word is overworked nowadays, I can think of no other equally accurate. All books are confessional; this one very much so.

W. L. P.

Yale University,  
Tuesday, 5 October, 1926.





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ADVENTURES AND  
CONFESSIONS



# I

## ADVENTURE

This morning I woke at four o'clock from an absurd and artificial dream, and by way of obtaining a proper contrast, went to the windows and looked at the stars. Above a row of dark poplars, Venus was playing with incomparable brilliancy the rôle of morning star; Mars was ruddily glowing in the south-west; the lesser lights were burning in their regular and appointed places. The North wind, which had blown fresh in the evening, had fallen; the cocks had not yet begun to crow; no sound reached my ears; in the silent and cloudless air the celestial machinery performed its work with noiseless precision.

It is unfortunate that there are so many incurious people to whom the sky is meaningless. When outdoors at night, on sea or land, all they notice is that it is raining, or foggy, or cloudy, or clear; and if they glance up when the stars are shining, all they know is that some points are brighter than others; when by the expenditure of a dollar in money and three hours in time, they could learn enough of the names, places, and movements of the



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constellations to make every clear sky interesting. It would be more than interesting, it would be friendly; for one would recognise aloft the familiar faces. Those that one sees at ten o'clock on January fifth will be there again the next January fifth, arriving with a punctuality merely imagined by railway directors. The summer and winter stars keep to their time-table, with an accuracy unreached by any man-made system. For even if the materialistic anthropologists were correct, and man had made God, man certainly did not make the stars.

Yet the works of man are clever and ingenious, and definite results fall from his constructions in a fashion that to a former age would have seemed miraculous. We do well not only to pay homage to great inventors, but to estimate their ability by their productions. Suppose one saw for the first time a girl playing an adding-machine, a sight to-day so familiar as to attract no attention; suppose one received from the machine a broad column of figures added accurately and with a speed so great as to arouse that kind of helpless smile that we bestow on masters of legerdemain. Could any philosopher persuade the witness that the result was a fluke? No, one feels sure that the right answer did not come by chance; there was intention behind the machine. And now suppose that another philosopher tried to convince us that the man who made the machine was stupid, lacking intelligence and foresight. I think we should reply

that although we never saw the inventor and had no notion of his personal appearance, the machine indicates such ability, patience, imagination, constructive skill, that whoever made it must have had a remarkable mind.

Yet the difference in complexity between the most intricate works of man and the stellar system is so vast that in comparison the finest human ingenuity seems crude.

Let us never forget the tremendousness of the ordinary. Familiarity with great things breeds contempt only in contemptible minds. We live every moment amid forces so colossal that the imagination boggles at them. Since I began to write this essay I have travelled millions of miles in space. Since I began to write this sentence I have been whirled many miles at terrific velocity. Yet I have felt no giddiness and no jar; the shock-absorbers are evidently quite superior to those on any automobile. The speed is so much greater that the car would appear to be going backward; yet I feel at ease and serene. The distance of the stars from the globe I inhabit is so vast that astronomers have to measure it in light-years; you can calculate the unit of measure by remembering that light travels about 200,000 miles a second. Some of the individual stars are spheres of such size as to be 300,000,000 miles in diameter. Yet every one is kept in its place as easily as you hold a tennis ball.

It appears to me not unreasonable to infer that

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the regularity and precision of these colossal forces indicate a mentality so great that in comparison the mind of Edison is puny.

In the year 1924 we celebrated the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of a man, who, strange as it may seem, spent his life *thinking*. With many people today, thinking has become almost a lost art. There is an enormous diffusion of culture; everybody reads. Reading is sometimes hostile to thought. If we have half an hour to spare, we do not meditate; we reach for a newspaper or a magazine or for something to "occupy" our minds. How many who read this article have in the last month done any orderly thinking? To be busy is not necessarily a profitable occupation. Indeed to think seriously is a difficult effort; to many the effort is as painful as it is strange.

Immanuel Kant, a little German about five feet high, was born in a little town in 1724. At an early age he began to think, which soon became a habit. It was his custom to rise at five o'clock and think for two hours. He had no apparatus; there was nothing in his hands. He sat and thought; he did not, like the woman, just sit. After he had spent a good many years, he wrote a book. It is natural to suppose that such a book, the fruit of innumerable hours of severe and productive meditation, would be valuable; it was; it is.

When you meet a man who has just spent a year in travel, you ask him, "Of all the things you have



seen abroad, what is the one thing that impressed you the most?" So, if I had met Kant, I should have asked him, "Of all the thoughts that have passed through your mind, what seems to you the greatest?" Fortunately it is not necessary to meet him. He told us. He wrote, in the same deliberate and reflective and word-weighting manner that characterised his utterances,

Two things fill me with constantly increasing admiration and awe, the longer and more earnestly I reflect on them: *the starry heavens without and the moral law within.*

It is the second that seems at first sight most astonishing. That the individual human being, who seems so transitory, so perishable, at the mercy of a fever germ or a street accident, to whom any day may bring an irremediable disaster, whose life history is largely a record of pettiness and folly, when it is no worse, that every individual man or woman should have something in his mind equal in sublimity to the starry skies, this makes one pause and wonder. Yet this philosopher, after years of thought, placed us on an equality with the majestic heavens.

It is amusing sometimes to read materialistic philosophy written to prove the insignificance of men and women on an insignificant planet; for the person who writes it is so cock-sure of himself.

Is there something in every one, no matter how impuissant he may be, as sublime and as awe-inspir-

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ing as the starry vault? Let us consider the moral law.

There are those who say all our actions are governed by selfishness, that there is no such thing as altruism or self-sacrifice; hence no heroism. I read the newspapers morning and evening, for the first page of every newspaper is a record of the crimes, follies, disasters of humanity, which, however, sometimes disclose the highest qualities conceivable.

I read of a hotel fire, where an elevator-boy, who may have seemed irredeemably vulgar in his manners and language, kept on driving his lift to the upper floors, saving human lives, and finally losing his own, dying in agonising torture. What made him send his machine up into that hell of flame? Did he wish to die? Was not life sweet to him? What force impelled him, a force so much greater than his fear of death? It was the moral law, "the likeliest God within the soul," and I say that that gamin is as sublime as the stars. When the *Titanic* went down, she carried with her New York millionaires, who had given their lives for foreign stewardesses. When some economists read of this, they called it foolishly quixotic; the lives of these men of huge affairs were vastly more important than the lives of ignorant women who cleaned pots and swept rooms. But these men knew that it was their duty to protect those who were physically weaker than they; and in the presence of disaster and mortal peril, they forgot their wealth and their im-

portance; they remembered only that they were men, and there were women to save. We call it the law of the sea. It is the moral law.

I read in the newspaper that two steamers came into collision one dark night off the Virginian capes. The rammed vessel was swiftly sinking. A male passenger came on deck, carrying a life-preserver; he saw a woman without one, and he offered her his, as lightly as a man would offer a seat to a woman on a street-car. She said, "What will you do?" And he replied easily, "Oh, I can get another." He knew he could not; he lied like a gentleman, as it is in certain emergencies the duty of a gentleman to lie. She was saved; he was lost. She did not know even the name of her saviour, nor does anyone else. No one can read that incident without a thrill; without feeling that not only did that black night reveal a hero, but that the whole level of human capacity has been raised. He threw away his life with a careless gesture.

As when a thundrous midnight, with black air  
That burns, rain-drops that blister, breaks a spell,  
Draws out the excessive virtue of some sheathed  
Shut unsuspected flower that hoards and hides  
Immensity of sweetness.

The World War, with all its filth and degradation, brought out individual deeds of self-sacrifice which are perhaps worth more than the victory of any nation.



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As the forces of the stellar universe reveal the working of an infinite mind, so the forces of the moral law reveal some Eternal Principle. It is my belief that the laws of Nature and the laws of Character have the same Origin, and flow from the same source.

But if the Stars and the Moral Law are so impressive, why aren't we all religious?

Well, apart from the indifference to religion which is characteristic of so many men and women whose time is completely taken up with work and recreation, whose minds and ambitions are concerned wholly with mundane and bodily affairs, there are two great obstacles to religious faith. Those who, like me, are loyal, devoted, joyful, passionate adherents of Christianity must not blink these difficulties or minimise their import. You cannot solve a problem by forgetting it, or by pretending it does not exist. An intelligent and sincere Christian is not one who has no doubts; he is one, who, after giving every consideration to adverse arguments, finds that after all, his faith is greater than his scepticism.

I shall mention two of the most obvious and most common objections brought against Christian belief.

First, the immense amount of injustice, evil, cruelty, pain and suffering in the world. Sorrow and agony are not illusions: there is nothing in life more real. No one in a city can walk six blocks

without seeing things that ought to be relieved or improved. No one has ever solved the problem of evil and no one ever will; no question comes earlier to the lips of anyone who thinks, than the query of how God can possibly be omnipotent and benevolent, and allow such conditions to exist or to continue. Because of the World War, many lost their religious faith. You may say in that case they did not have much to lose. No, but they lost all they had.

If every sunrise brings every living man nearer nothing, then the world is run at a loss. The deficit indeed is so large that the Mind controlling the stars shows in practical business less ability than a bootblack. If Henry Ford ran his factories as this world is managed, he would soon become bankrupt. If the output of Ford cars were as streaky and uncertain in quality as the output of human babies, the production would cease. Babies, however, continue to multiply; if life be not an asset, it is a tragedy.

The Founder of Christianity clearly recognised that evil permeated everywhere the conditions of life, and he predicted that it would continue to do so for an indefinite period. The Christian religion offers its followers no escape or immunity from evil; it supplies them with sufficient force to fight it.

If life is really a journey, if we are not only travelling, but travelling some-whither, and if the goal of that journey be splendid, then, *after the goal is*

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*reached*, the sufferings on the way, although they are real and terrible, will be of no account at all, will trouble the traveller no more than a scar. Suppose you wished to visit some friend in equatorial Africa. The route you take is full of peril, full of acute suffering; finally you arrive; you greet him with delight. He may enquire sympathetically, "Didn't you have many painful experiences?" "Why, yes, I suffered much and often; and apart from bodily pain and privation, there were times when I was shaken by fear, even paralysed by despair. But I don't care anything about all that *now*! Here we are together!" Then perhaps he enquires concerning the road you selected, and exclaims in surprise and pity, "Why, that was the worst possible route! Didn't you know there was an easier trail?" "No, I took the only one I knew." "But don't you wish that you had come by an easier and safer path?" "Why, no, I don't particularly care *now* what road I took. Here we are together!"

The pain, fear, and torment were real and terrifying; but after one has reached the desired haven, the tempest becomes only a toothless memory.

Could we by a wish  
Have what we will and get the future now,  
Would we wish aught done undone in the past?

The second great obstacle in the way of religious faith is *Uncertainty*. If Christianity is true, why does God leave us in such perplexity and doubt?



Why did he not reveal Himself in such a manner as to be unmistakable? It will be remembered that one man said that whoever God was, He was not a gentleman; for no gentleman would leave another in the dark as to his meaning and intentions.

It's strange that God should fash to frame  
The yearth and lift sae hie,  
An' clean forget to explain the same  
To a gentleman like me.

Well, is the relation between us and God exactly like that of one gentleman to another? Are we on equal planes of intelligence?

When Henry Howard Furness was over eighty years of age, I heard him give one of his famous readings from Shakespeare. He read a familiar passage from *King Henry V*. Then he paused and asked the air, "Now just exactly what did Shakespeare mean by that passage?" He paused again, and asked, "But how can my puny mind grasp the ideas in a mind like that of William Shakespeare?"

Furness was one of the leading Shakespearian scholars in the world. He had devoted a long life to this one author; yet he felt that the distance between his mind and that of the poet was so great that it could not be bridged. Yet *we* think we ought to understand the Supreme Intelligence.

Suppose, with no knowledge of harmony and counterpoint, and with inability to play any instrument, you insisted that a musician must explain

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to you the construction of one of Beethoven's symphonies. Suppose Einstein tried to explain his theory of relativity to a hen. The distance between the mind of a hen and the mind of Einstein is not so vast as that between the human and divine intelligence.

Even in so close a relation as that between parents and children, the former sometimes have to leave the latter not only in perplexity, but with a rankling sense of injustice.

I believe that if the complete meaning of the starry universe should suddenly be plainly revealed to us, we should lose our minds; not because of its horror or tragic import, but because of its overwhelming immensity. Our brains would crack like an eggshell.

Sometimes, where men are repairing something in a road, there is a sign

DO NOT LOOK AT THIS LIGHT.

Of course everybody immediately tries to look, and immediately desists. One cannot see in the dark, but too much light is more dangerous for the eyes than darkness.

Our intelligence in its present state is no more adapted to grasp the meaning of the universe, than a baby is fit to lift a safe.

But the Uncertainty is precisely what makes life interesting. Here is where and how the Christian religion becomes an ADVENTURE. What? you re-

fuse to follow Christ because you are not certain of the outcome? What would you think of a man who should refuse to play any game unless he were assured in advance of victory? What would you think of a man who refused to enter upon any course of action unless it could be proved to him in advance that his efforts would be rewarded with success? We not only make unreasonable demands upon religion, but if they were granted, all the zest of life would be lost.

The very last word to apply to the Christian religion is the word used by its enemies—an anæsthetic. Christianity is not an anæsthetic; it is indeed the opposite. It is a tonic, a stimulant, a driving force. It is true that Christian faith is an immense solace and comfort to those who are old, solitary, sick, and feeble; but in the main Christian faith is for active boys and girls, for strong-hearted men and women, who are bearing the burden and heat of the day. We should not become Christians because we are afraid we may die, but because we expect to live and do some good in the world. We are voyagers who want a rudder for the ship and a port to reach. We want life to mean something.

To the true Christian every day is exciting, every day is an adventure. There are times of sorrow and heartbreak, but there are no times of dullness and boredom. To one who believes in God's revelation in Christ, and who therefore believes in his own destiny, there can be nothing trivial. Every-



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thing counts. You cannot go to the office or the shop, you cannot hear a piece of music or read a novel, without undergoing an experience that helps to shape the whole course of life. And who knows but in today's regular work some event of momentous importance may happen? And who can tell in reading a novel but that on page 287 some phrase may permanently affect his character?

The Adventure is exactly where FAITH comes in. In every important emergency of life and in every undertaking of any consequence, we act not on knowledge, but on faith. Let us not demand knowledge in religion, when we never have it in business, in marriage, in politics, and in investments. What is Faith?

Some say that the farmer has faith when he plants seed in the Autumn that something will come up in the Spring. Such a remark betrays ignorance of faith. Faith is more difficult and exacting. The farmer in that instance has knowledge, not faith. He would be a fool if he did not expect something to come up. It came up last year. His father had the same experience, and his neighbours. He is treading no new path, sailing no uncharted sea, but walking on a perfectly safe road, trodden by millions of feet before him.

Columbus had Faith when he sailed West, and kept sailing West. What lent particular zest to his voyage was the possibility of defeat, disaster, disgrace, and death. But there was also the possi-



bility of victory. He believed there was land, and that he could find it by sailing West. If he had known before starting that he should find it, the excitement of the excursion would have evaporated. Had he known that he would die before reaching it, he would not have started at all. But the combination of the Prize and the Risk was what appealed to his bold, adventurous heart.

Faith was what inspired Shackleton, Amundsen, and that hero of heroes, Captain Scott. Victory or death, possibly both; anyhow, a great prize and a terrible peril. They tried for one and risked the other.

In the more ordinary experiences of everyday life, it is faith that guides us into every interesting experiment. If a boy is free to choose, why does he choose one college rather than another? He does not know it is the best; no one can prove it; he may die there of illness, or his character may be injured; he cannot see into the future, but he goes there on faith. Every choice is an act of faith. When, upon graduation, he chooses a profession or occupation, he does not know what he is doing; he may choose the line of work which will be the worst possible for his ability and temperament. But he goes ahead on faith, doing the best he can in the darkness. Marriage is a supreme act of faith. When a girl leaves the security of her home, and unites her fortune and life and chance of happiness with a man whom she cannot know until she has

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lived with him, she acts on faith. Many marriages result in disaster; but the vast majority of people are willing to try the experiment. It is an adventure, entered upon by faith. . . . And finally comes Death, the most tremendous adventure of all.

On the deck of the *Lusitania*, in 1915, stood Charles Frohman. He had spent his life taking chances, and was now taking another. Theatrical management is one of the most risky and speculative of all forms of business, for no one has ever been able with certainty to predict the fate of a new play. The majority fail, and failure means not only disappointment, and the loss of expected profits, but the loss of everything already invested, for the curtain cannot rise until there has been a large expenditure. On the other hand, a successful play is a fortune. Charles Frohman was on his way to Europe, his head full of new plans for the extension of his theatrical undertaking abroad. The *Lusitania* began to sink, and some one said to him, "Mr. Frohman, are you afraid to die?" He smiled, and replied, "Why, I have always looked upon death as the greatest adventure in life." Spoken like the brave man he was.

As I write these words, America is in the midst of the excitement of a Presidential campaign. Every man and woman who votes next November will accomplish an act of pure faith. No one can tell whether his vote may not be adverse to the best interests of the country he loves; no one has any

*knowledge* of the future. Voting is always done on faith. Now, because of the lack of knowledge, is the country full of political agnostics? Because a man cannot know whether the ticket he prefers is the right one, does he decide to abstain from voting? By no means. He not only votes enthusiastically, positively, dogmatically, he is usually so cock-sure that he endeavours to induce others to follow him. There are many who would gladly cast the ballot for the whole nation. It is pure faith. My faith in God may not always be as strong and unclouded as I wish it were, but I have more faith in Jesus Christ than I have in the Republican party, or in the Democratic party, or in any party or in any candidate. It seems to me singular that so many people should have no faith in God and exhibit such touching, childlike faith in a political leader.

People never become excited on matters of knowledge, but only on faith. If a man should ask me, "Do you believe that two and two make four?" I should reply, "No, I don't believe it; I know it." Suppose he should say, "Well, you are wrong; they really make five." Should I argue with him? Of course not. I don't waste my time talking with a madman. "Have it your own way, if you like."

You could never induce England and Germany to fight on this proposition: a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. Matters of knowledge quickly lose interest, their power to



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appeal. They become commonplaces. So long as there was doubt whether a machine heavier-than-air could fly, the proposition and the experiment were both amazingly interesting. Now airplanes fly over golf-courses, and even the caddies do not raise their heads, but continue their ever-animated conversations. There is no interest without the possibility of error and disaster.

Men will not fight on matters of knowledge. But they will fight for their family, their friends, their college, their country, and their religion.

Now as the chance of failure makes every adventure attractive, so the possibility of delusion makes Christianity appealing. To be absolutely honest, I must admit that the Christian religion may be a myth, my hopes in it only dust, my destiny annihilation. But my whole life is staked on the belief that it is true. I have more faith in Christ than in any other person or thing. I have directed all my life's activities with the faith that he was divine. To use a vulgar phrase, if a man bets all he has, the shirt on his back, you cannot demand more of him than that. The most reasonable explanation of the person of Christ and of his history is that he revealed God. With that basis, I go ahead on faith.

Therefore if you ask me, "Do you believe in the Son of God?" I answer firmly, "Yes." "Do you believe in the future life?" "Yes." "Do you believe that you will see again your father and mother?" "Yes." "How sure are you of this?"



"Well, I am surer of this than of anything that cannot be proved." "Are you as sure of the future life as that two and two make four?" And without hesitation, I reply, "No; not so sure as that." However, it seems to me more reasonable than not to believe it. I am not afraid. I am going ahead. I did not enlist in the service of Christ as a camp-follower, but as a soldier. Be it glory or be it death, I am glad I enlisted.

John Quincy Adams, who of all our Presidents was the greatest scholar, and who, in addition, was so austere that it is impossible to imagine him in a light-hearted mood, this stern and learned man, every night in the White House kneeled down and said the prayer his mother taught him as a child:

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
If I should die before I wake,  
I pray the Lord my soul to take.

Although the prayer has been sanctified by thousands of innocent lips, and although the iron-sided Adams found it good enough for him, I heard a version whose author I know not, which I like much better, because it expresses exactly my own attitude.

Now I lay me down to sleep,  
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.  
And wake I soon or wake I never,  
I give my soul to Christ forever!

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In addition to the important fact that there can be no real interest in religion without uncertainty, there can also be no *virtue*. Uncertainty makes the Christian adventure exciting; and it is the only basis of conduct. If the truth of religion were demonstrable, and the way to win heaven were plainly charted, there could be no goodness at all. If we knew that by abstaining from certain things—which is still some persons' notion of morality—if we knew that by not smoking, drinking, dancing, kissing, lying, cheating, we could win immortal life, then there would be no virtue at all. There would simply be calculation. Heaven would be exclusively occupied by hard-headed, prudent business men; they would get it all. The charming, gracious, lovely men and women of impulse would be in hell.

Suppose in a room I dropped a ten-dollar bill, and someone started to pick it up. Suppose I reminded him that if he took it, it would be all he would receive. But if he would let it alone, in two months he would receive a million dollars. Suppose I could demonstrate this as a certainty. Of course he would refrain from the pleasure of seizing the ten-dollar bill. Now suppose he should pride himself on his superior virtue, on the nobility and self-sacrifice of his character, on his freedom from the sin of avarice. "You saw me? I had the chance to immediately enjoy ten dollars. I refused it. My mind is set on higher things." What should we think of such sanctimonious arrogance?

No, Christianity is the Adventure, the Supreme Adventure. We do not know the outcome. But we know we are following the only person in history who seems like God. If he is living, it is our hope that some day we shall see him. If he shared the fate of flies and worms, then that is good enough for us. We want to be where he is.

But as all his words were words of courage and hope and triumph, as his way of life can be tried and tested and is always found good and productive, we follow him not in fear and doubt, but in faith. Let the future take care of itself. That is what he particularly advised.

## II

### SALVATION

Nearly all the books I read ask questions without answering them; and indeed it requires no ability, no ingenuity, and no experience to ask difficult questions. Every child has asked its mother questions that learned philosophers and scientists have used up their lives trying to answer. The Bible differs from most books in its definite, positive replies to the most vital, eager enquiries from the eternally hungry human heart.

Socrates spent his days asking searching questions; Jesus came into the world not to ask, but to answer. The word Gospel means *Good News*; he brought it. There was no shadow of scepticism, no penumbra of uncertainty in his mind, or in the tones of his bold, confident, authoritative voice. He was not a denier; he was an affirmer. How amazing, in this world of torturing doubt and perplexity, where nearly every mind is in conflict not only with others, but with itself, to hear such positive statements as these:

*I am the living bread which came down from heaven.*

*The water that I shall give him shall be to him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*



*I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.*

*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.*

*Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

When Mrs. Humphry Ward was talking to Walter Pater about her scepticism and her disbelief in the divinity of Christ, supposing that he shared her views, she was startled by his reply. He told her that he could not agree with her. "There are such mysterious things. Take that saying, 'Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden.' How can you explain that? There is a mystery in it—a something supernatural."

What is the meaning of Salvation by *Faith*? What is Salvation? how are we saved by faith? and from what disaster are we saved?

That we can be saved by faith is affirmed positively by Jesus, and reaffirmed by Paul.

*This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* When the jailer came to Paul and Silas, he asked a question, the term of address showing immense respect for his prisoners: *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* He received an immediate, unhesitating, and definite reply: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.*

What must I *do* to be saved?

The poor fellow thought he had to do something. His experience of life, a sufficiently common one, had

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taught him that good things were not to be had for the asking. Nobody was giving away anything desirable. If one wanted anything badly, one must be prepared to pay money for it, or to work for it, or to make some special sacrifice for it. Thus he must have been astounded when he was told merely to believe.

The statement that salvation would come by faith was not only a new idea to the jailer, but it exploded a whole accumulation of superstitions, to which millions of individuals still cling in the twentieth century. There is nothing possible that men would not do if by doing it they could be saved. Any amount of painful effort, any amount of galling sacrifice, would be endured with patience, if the sufferer believed that by such means he could be saved.

Did you ever try to walk on your bare knees in gravel? It is excessively uncomfortable, and an exceedingly inefficient and therefore silly method of locomotion; yet there are many who have tried it and gone long distances in order to attain salvation.

I mention this as only one of any number of bodily sacrifices that people have undergone; and most methods of religion are based fundamentally on a superstition, a superstition that is all but universal, and that is characteristic of every religion except Christianity. When I say Christianity, I mean the teachings of Jesus in the Gospels, not theological systems built upon them.

What is this superstition? It is the superstition that *God is against us*.

You will find this particular brand of pessimism at the basis of nearly all the world's religions, at the basis of many minds that have ceased to believe in any religion, and indeed it is an almost ineradicable element in human nature.

If I can accomplish only one thing by this essay, I wish to accomplish this. I wish to drive out this particular superstition from the mind of every one who reads these pages, so that those who began this essay in the grasp of this superstition will shake it off; and stand up and walk like free men and women. The vast majority of educated and otherwise intelligent men and women are still in the bondage of this myth, no matter what their personal religion may be.

An old and very familiar idea in the various religions of the world is that God is against us, and must be pacified. Although such an idea is unworthy of man, and an insult to God, it is exceedingly common.

Many anti-Christians today talk cantingly of the old free and sunny-hearted Greeks, and of the beauty of their religion. As a matter of fact, if the Greek gods were alive today, they would all be in jail. The Greek idea of Fate was profoundly pessimistic. "The Gods often make the wrong way seem the right way to a man, in order that they may lead him to destruction."



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“Lead us not into temptation” may be difficult to explain—but there is no difficulty in explaining the Greek idea. The gods played with helpless humanity.

Christian missionaries have found natives who, not content with the inescapable miseries and sorrows and privations of life, were adding to their already intolerable burdens by religion. They lacerated themselves, they encouraged sores and diseases, they sacrificed their lives and sometimes something more precious. Mothers have stood by the banks of rivers and thrown their babies into the stream: “Now, God, you’ve *got* to be good to me! I have given you what is dearer to me than my own life: I have made the supreme sacrifice; you cannot ask anything more!” These and other instances in various parts of the world and in various epochs of history are illustrations of the central superstition—that God is against us.

This element of fear, more fitting for a slave than for a freeman, not only degrades humanity, but to an even lower degree it degrades God. For, with the assumption that God is against us goes the theory that he can be humoured and pacified—as we humour and pacify troublesome children, peevish invalids, and men who are drunk.

If therefore we sacrifice something we enjoy, comfortable clothes, healthy activities, attractive food, cigarettes, caramels, or what not, we may turn aside or soften the wrath of God. The idea of



sacrificing SOMETHING is in all religions except the religion taught by Jesus; in this indeed there is the element of sacrifice, but of a different nature.

Worship itself should never have the element of fear; worship should be the glad, spontaneous expression of the heart, as joyful and free from terror as greeting the sunshine.

One day I stood on the front platform of a street-car in St. Petersburg; every time we passed a church, which was often, the motorman took off his cap three times. Now if he had saluted happily and cheerfully, like meeting a friend, it would have been pleasant to contemplate. But he took off his cap as though he were warding off the evil eye, as though he were trying to prevent misfortune; as though it were necessary to take it off three times, for if he doffed it only twice, who knew what might happen?

In speaking of the universal custom of sacrificing certain things that one enjoys in order to pacify God, I am not attacking the customs of fasting and penance in the Catholic Church, any more than I attack High Church Protestants for the use of very tall candles. Although I do not fast myself, and care nothing for the height of a candle, I perfectly understand that these are not superstitions, but are forms of worship; they assist those who follow these customs to concentrate their minds on spiritual things. It is not the practice of anything, but the *motive*, that I am considering. When the motive is fear, or

the belief that God can be pacified, it is rank superstition.

The superstition that God is against us and that his anger may be if not appeased, at least diverted, by doing certain things, lingers in the minds of many persons who look upon themselves as emancipated from religion. I believe that the one superstition that lives after all others have died is this: I am quite certain that it is at this moment living in the minds of some who are reading this page.

There are many otherwise intelligent men and women who would not dare to say "I haven't had an automobile accident in my life," *without touching wood*.

I do not know how many times I myself have made a similar remark, but invariably some one has hastily urged that I touch wood. Well, I will not touch wood, for it is inconceivable to me that touching wood can have any rational relation to my well-being. There are many who will touch wood smilingly, half-jokingly perhaps, but they will touch it! They would not dare to omit the ceremony.

This is the same old superstition which is at the basis of so many of the world's religions; and it is unworthy of a clear, rational mind. It is unworthy of any free man or woman.

There goes with it an even more degrading superstition—that if you have been enjoying good health or good fortune or both, it is not safe to mention

it aloud. Many a person has said, "I haven't had a cold this winter!" Next morning he wakes up, snuffling, and he says, "Confound it! why didn't I keep my mouth shut? I was getting along all right, but of course I had to be fool enough to boast about it, and now you see what I've got!"

This is a superstition connected with a degrading religion. The idea is that if you are happy, *look out*—God may notice you, and then he will put you where you belong. Don't sing before breakfast, don't laugh too loud, and above all, never admit that all is well. It won't be if you do. Many farmers, all of whom are more or less dependent on the weather, are very careful not to affirm anything optimistic. When their crops are exactly right, and everything is going perfectly well, and you ask them as to the state of their affairs, their most jubilant reply is "Can't complain." Anything more might be dangerous.

There are persons who are not Catholics, not subject to any church discipline, who will give up cigarettes or chocolates for a brief period. Is it possible that Almighty God can be interested or gratified? It is the heart, not the candy, that should be surrendered.

This familiar superstition of sacrificing SOMETHING to an otherwise implacable Tyrant leads to gross and vulgar bargaining. In times of stress and danger, in times when some member of the family



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is sick—"O God, if you will answer this prayer, I will do so and so, and give up so and so."

The teachings of Jesus are contrary to these vulgar ideas. He told us that God is love, that we are His children, that we cannot serve Him or please Him by giving up creature comforts, but by giving up our hearts. This is the sacrifice demanded by Christianity. It is the giving up, not of bonbons, but of the Self, of the Will, of the Mind, of the Personality. Let us never forget that the essence of religion as he taught it is to love God and love man; and that to love God and to love man *is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.*

Suppose a husband gave his wife a fine house, a fine automobile, a large monthly allowance, and gave his heart to another woman, would his wife regard him as a good and faithful husband?

We are saved by faith, by really believing in Jesus as the Son of God. So long as we really and truly believe that, our lives are on that plane, and are thus better, are saved. Can a man be saved by faith? Why, of course he can. Many a man has been saved from vice and unworthiness by believing in one good woman. Many boys have been saved by believing in one good man. Countless millions of soldiers have given their lives and found the necessary courage to do it by faith in a flag. Belief is the foundation of conduct; faith is the motive power of action. Jean Valjean was transformed from a



criminal into a noble and beneficent character by the life and words of the good Bishop.

What is it to have faith? Is it to have faith at one critical moment or is it to have faith as a daily source of action? Is faith a stimulant or is it a necessary diet?

Although I belong to the evangelical branch of the Protestant Church, I think our doctrine of conversion needs in practise some modification. The old division between the ranks of the "saved" and the "unsaved" was not, I think, always founded on a wise or verifiable basis. The old idea was that at a certain moment in his life every man must have had *an identical experience*, by which he knew that at that moment he passed from the ranks of the unsaved to the saved, and that thenceforth and forevermore he was not only saved, but *safe*—that, I think, was one of the numerous superstitions of an artificial theology.

I have lately been reading a little book which I wish every intelligent Catholic and Protestant would read; for while it is not in the least necessary that Catholics and Protestants should unite to form one church, their forms of worship and their ecclesiastical organisation being so different, it is necessary that they should be united in spirit, with mutual respect and admiration and love. This book is by the Reverend Oliver Chase Quick, and is called *Catholic and Protestant Elements in Christianity*. The object of the book is not to draw Protestants

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and Catholics together in ritual, or in ceremonies, but in mutual understanding. What the author says about conversion proves that the very individualism on which we Protestants pride ourselves has sometimes led to insistence on a uniformity which is contrary to the facts of human nature and which is not at all necessary to a truly "saving faith."

The individualism of Protestant Christianity has taken various forms. In its essence it seems to be identified with the view that Christianity, on its subjective side, is a quite definite experience of the individual consciousness, which is identically reproduced in all those who have the right to call themselves Christians . . . a similar assumption that the Christian experience must in its essence be identically the same for all, and that experiences which do not conform to a certain definite type cannot be truly Christian. . . . On the whole Protestantism, while allowing wide variety in the outward forms of religion or else taking a negative attitude towards them, has insisted strongly and positively on the need for a uniformity in spiritual experience. Catholicism, while insisting strongly on conformity in things outward, has tolerated and even encouraged much greater variation in the inward apprehension of spiritual realities on the part of the individual soul. The very individualism of the Protestant may make more searching and more rigid demands upon the individual than any doctrine which, exalting the outward rules of the society, exacts uniformity only in outward compliance therewith. Individualism is not necessarily associated with liberty.

I remember in my childhood that the deacons of the church were like diagnosticians; they examined all candidates to determine whether or not they

were "saved," and that was settled by their "experience," which had to exhibit certain definite mental signs. There is a truth underlying this, but there is an error too, for spiritually human beings are very different.

A true word was spoken by the Reverend Dr. James McGee: "We must not make it harder to enter the Christian Church than Christ made it to become His followers."

We are saved by faith not only by a sudden revelation, as in the case of Paul, but by a gradual yielding of the whole mind and body to the Light of the World. And this faith is just as necessary on any day fifteen years after one has joined a church, as it is at the moment of decision.

I heartily believe that we are saved by faith; it is interesting to enquire what we are saved from? It used to be believed that we were saved from the punishment of sin. But I think this stresses the wrong point, and furthermore, I do not believe it is true. Modern students of Christianity more and more are insisting that it is not the punishment of sin from which faith in Christ saves us, but from sin itself.

Now there are modernists and modernists. There are those critics who, by denying the Incarnation, take away the foundation of Christianity, and to my motion, make our religion a farce. There are those modernists, who say that although the Gospel is not true, we should act as if it were; which may be



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a good enough doctrine for babies and idiots, but will never be accepted by the majority of adult minds.

There are other modernists whose whole aim is to get nearer to the person and teachings of Jesus Christ, where every "forward" movement is in reality (in time) a movement backward, to bring out the Divine Teacher from the superstructure of human theology. This is good; for Jesus is more modern than we.

I myself believe literally in the twenty-first verse of the first chapter of Matthew:

*for he shall save his people from their sins.*

It is impossible that we can be saved from the *punishment* of our sins. Sin and suffering are inseparably linked together. Punishment follows sin as night follows day, as Winter follows Autumn. We have all sinned; and every time we have sinned, either we or somebody else has suffered or will suffer. The result can no more be avoided than one can tear away an event from its cause.

But there is abundance of evidence to show that faith in Jesus saves people from their *sins*. No human being can become impeccable; but individual sins have been in many cases entirely overcome by Christian faith. Jesus never dealt with outward conduct, still less with professions; but always with the source of conduct—the human heart. He proposed to substitute a good desire for an evil desire,



to grow flowers in the place of weeds. He created a revolution in the human mind, a new birth, so that the mind would not want evil things so eagerly, but would want something better.

In Harold Begbie's book, *Twice Born Men*, which Professor William James regarded with respect and admiration, there are plenty of authenticated cases where vice which had defied medical skill and every entreaty based on self-respect, was annihilated by faith in Jesus Christ.

Many men, apparently incurable, were saved to themselves, to their families, and to society. The last words that Jesus said to the woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, were these:

*Thy faith hath saved thee: go in peace.*

There is surely something greater here than mere personal influence. One learns good manners by associating with ladies and gentlemen; one's standards of speech and conduct are elevated by meeting those who are truly civilised. All good examples are more efficient than one may be inclined to think; but something happened to that woman in the house of Simon that was different from what would have happened if Simon had been entertaining a gentleman who had merely spoken kindly to her, or who had remonstrated with his host for treating her contemptuously. We do not forget acts and words of kindness and consideration; we remain forever grateful; and sometimes

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we actually treat others better because some one has shown us the charm of enlightened behaviour.

But that uninvited guest in Simon's dining-room knew well enough that the Person whose head she anointed and whose feet she washed with tears was of no common clay. She knew that for the moment the fashionable house, filled with luxury and refinement, was transformed into a temple of God, was illuminated by the Divine Presence. She was not saved from a life of sin ending in misery, by admiration, or by respect, or by a good example; she was saved by faith in the Son of God.

The Christian religion, with its power to redeem men and women, depends upon the Incarnation. It is because Jesus was *God-with-us* that we have faith in him. I know of no other access to the Divine Force, I know of no other communication between man and God.

Believing as I do that the whole Christian religion depends upon the truth of the Incarnation, believing as I do that the Incarnation is the only Light of the world, I found it heartening to read these words in a book by one of the greatest scholars of our time, by one who has made a profound study not only of philosophy and the history of thought, but of comparative religions. In a little book published in 1924, called *The Christ of the New Testament*, and written by Paul Elmer More, I find his conclusion to be:

Only, thus much I would urge: if the supposition of Christianity be not true, then we have no sure hope of religion. . . . In contrast with all other religions the peculiar strength of Christianity is that in the Incarnation it reduces mythology to the simplest possible terms; every extravagance, every overgrowth of fancy, is swept away for the bare fact that God in Jesus appeared among men. . . . To say that the dogma of Christianity is endangered by the comparative study of religions implies a gross ignorance of facts or a wilful misapprehension of values. . . . if the divine nature has at any time in any wise directly revealed itself to man, if any voice shall ever reach us out of the infinite circle of silence, where else shall we look but to the words of the Gospel? Not Christianity alone is at stake in our acceptance or rejection of the Incarnation, but religion itself.

There are perhaps many who read the story of the woman from the streets in the same attitude held by Simon; she was after all wiser than he, for she knew she needed salvation, and he felt no need for himself. There are those who read of sinners saved from drunkenness and from other forms of gross vice, with an emotion compounded only of curiosity and pity. This would be like going to see a tragedy on the stage, without realising that the suffering hero is tragic because he represents not an isolated case, but humanity. The pity and fear, which are supposed to be the emotions chiefly aroused by tragic spectacles, are, in the greatest tragedies, pity and fear for ourselves. We all stand in need of salvation.

Those who are not tempted by drunkenness and

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crime are often perhaps in greater need of salvation than the outcasts. Just as no man feels so ignorant as a true scholar, because his ideal of knowledge is high, so the same standards can be applied to character. Every man who is not the man he would like to be needs salvation. The most elevating, the most saving force is faith.



### III

### SIN

Jeremiah speaks: The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Jesus speaks: It must needs be that offences come: but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

Paul speaks: I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin.

In the poem *Gold Hair: a Legend of Pornic*, Robert Browning dramatised a true story. It appears in the little Breton town there lived a thin, pale girl, whose chief claim to beauty was her magnificent yellow hair. Her character was apparently so impeccable that to her friends and neighbours she seemed more saintly than human. She was devout; she was never frivolous, never angry; she spoke no words of slander, no words of impatience

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or petulance; she took care of the sick and dying. When she walked along the street, her presence was a benediction. The Pornic people used to say that no matter how streaky and imperfect the characters of others were, in this girl there was certainly no flaw. She had even on earth attained perfection. There could be nothing in her life which she would be unwilling to have known.

No one was surprised when she was stricken with tuberculosis. Every one felt that she was too angelic to remain long in this sordid world, and that heaven was her natural home. Before she died, she made this request of her parents. "I am going to arrange my hair exactly as I wish it to appear while I lie in the coffin. Lift me very carefully from the bed. When you are preparing my body for burial, on no account disturb my hair, and be equally careful when you place my corpse in the coffin, so that those who come to the funeral will see me exactly as I wish to look."

I dare say that when her friends heard of this strange request, they were secretly pleased. "Well, now, that proves that after all, she was human. She was proud of her lovely hair, she did have that faint touch of feminine coquetry, and wished even in the coffin to appear at her best."

The girl died. Her orders were scrupulously carried out. People bent over and kissed the white face, which looked like a silver wedge between the

heaps of gold. Her grave was under the floor of the old church.

Years later, this pavement needed repair; and while workmen were busy with pick and shovel, one of the curious boys looking on suddenly saw something shining in the earth. He picked it up. It was a gold coin! The priest said, "Dig deeper!" and around the skull they found a fortune in gold money.

This damnable fact proved that the heart of this girl, which every one had believed to be uncontaminated with a single shade of impurity, was dominated by one of the most dreadful sins known to humanity—the sin of avarice. She was, despite all her other and very real virtues, a miser. Avarice is one of the blackest sins, because it is so wholly selfish. The girl was an orthodox believer; she believed in heaven and hell; she went to church faithfully, and said her prayers every day. Yet her consuming lust for money was so terrible, so unconquerable, that at the very last it triumphed over her religious faith, over all the teachings she had believed in from birth, over her hopes of heaven, over her fears of hell. She could not relinquish the gold which she had coveted and amassed secretly during the years of her life; she must take it with her into the silent grave.

Was the girl a hypocrite? I don't know. In every other way except her fatal obsession, she was sincere and sweet; she followed the precepts of religion and morality, she was unselfish in giving her

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time to the poor, the old, the sick, infirm, and despairing. But in her heart, along with these fruits of the Spirit, remained the ineradicable root of all evil.

The optimist Browning tells this horrible story, because it confirms the teachings of Christianity. Christian faith teaches original sin, the corruption of the human heart. We all stand in daily need of redemption.

To find this malignant filth in a sanctuary as pure as that young girl's heart seemed, was, as Browning says, like finding a spider in the communion-cup, like finding a toad in the christening-font. That some persons may be mainly evil, and others mainly good, is neither surprising nor terrifying; but the mixture of good and evil in the finest characters is both a marvel and a curse.

Nothing is more astounding than the internal range of human nature. Not only are there people living and dead, who are classified as heroes or villains; but in the heart of every person there are purity and vulgarity, courage and cowardice, nobility and meanness, sublimity and triviality, unselfishness and selfishness. The human heart is a garden where lovely flowers and poisonous weeds grow side by side. Life is dangerous.

A good man sitting in church at half-past eleven on Sunday morning, may be in a hallowed frame of mind; at that moment it would seem incredible to him that he could be coarse, or profane, or petulant,



or mean. Yet before sunset that same person may be swearing in rage, or tempted by sensual imaginings, or exhibit the evidences of petty jealousy and selfish egotism. Out of the same mouth, said the Apostle James, cometh blessing and cursing.

My observation of human nature and my belief in the teachings of Jesus combine to prove overwhelmingly to my mind the truth of original sin.

When I say that I believe in original sin, I do not mean that I believe in a once commonly-accepted theological dogma. We used to be taught that when Adam and Eve ate the apple, not only did sin enter the world so that every succeeding human baby was conceived and born in sin, but that you and I, now dwelling in America in the twentieth century, are equally guilty with Adam of committing that particular sin.

In Adam's fall  
We sinned all.

Such a doctrine appears to me absurd. However much I may regret Adam's unfortunate curiosity, what he did has never troubled my conscience. I don't care whether he ate an apple or a watermelon. I feel not the slightest responsibility for any one of his actions or thoughts. I have done enough myself to cause me sufficient remorse without borrowing obligations from men long dead.

But although the theory that I myself committed a sin when Adam ate the apple appears to me ri-

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diculous, it does not appear to me so absurd as the doctrine I hear frequently today from Christian pulpits, and read even oftener in nicely-printed books. The modern teaching is that there is no such thing as original sin; that men and women are not naturally bad, but naturally good; that the impelling forces in the human heart are not downward, but upward; that human nature is inherently beautiful and noble. This seems to me the last word in falsehood and folly.

Of course if this reassuring and flattering theory be true, we do not need to be born again; we do not need to be converted; we need no divine sacrifice; we need no church, no Bible, and no religion; the church and the Gospels go together to the scrap-heap. Christ lived and died, not for sinners, but for people who are pretty good anyhow; the Great Physician spent his life visiting those who were healthy.

All we should conceivably need if we were naturally good would be some training to develop our goodness, as a natural athlete needs a professional coach. Incidentally, very few are natural athletes.

Yet it is the truth we want. I do not cling to religion because I love it. If it is true that human nature is naturally good, I am through with the Christian religion.

Despite the fact that in the bright lexicon of youth there is today no such word as sin, the fact of sin cannot be annihilated by complacency. If sin

is selfishness and virtue unselfishness, then I believe that man is naturally, instinctively evil. My belief is verified by the study of history, by reading the newspapers, and by using my eyes.

*Know thyself.* Did any man ever know himself? The biggest of all fools, said the Frenchman, is the man who thinks he knows himself. As we look back on many of our past actions, our conduct and the impelling motive often seem inexplicable. How could I have done that? How could I have been such an ass? We go even further. A very common expression is this—What *possessed* me to do such a thing? As though we really had been possessed by some evil spirit of folly or darkness.

Sometimes, indeed, though not so often, we are as much surprised by our courage or goodness in some emergency as by our more frequent yielding to selfishness. In the brilliant play, *The Devil's Disciple*, Bernard Shaw makes his theoretically unprincipled hero give up his life for some one else, some one whom he did not love. He was as much amazed by his action as were his neighbours. The point in the motivation of that particular drama was that the hero could not tell why he had done it. He simply had been ignorant of himself.

The heart of a girl is a dark forest, says a Russian proverb; if we cannot know our own hearts, how foolish it is to pretend that we understand the minds and hearts of others! Browning, a lifelong specialist in the soul, came to the conclusion that

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he did not know anything about it. All he could give was an abundance of individual illustrations.

"You are sick, that's sure"—they say:

"Sick of what?"—they disagree.

" 'Tis the brain"—thinks Doctor A;

" 'Tis the heart"—holds Doctor B;

"The liver—my life I'd lay!"

"The lungs!" "The lights!"

Ah me!

So ignorant of man's whole  
Of bodily organs plain to see—  
So sage and certain, frank and free,  
About what's under lock and key—  
Man's soul!

The human heart, said Jeremiah, is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; *who can know it?*

I shall believe that man is naturally good, when in danger the average man feels the impulse of courage stronger than the impulse of self-preservation; when in the exposure to sensuality, the average man secretly prefers continence to self-indulgence; when, in a crisis of his fortunes, the average man instinctively prefers the shattering truth to the sheltering falsehood; when, in ordinary business affairs, the average man instinctively prefers the welfare of the prospective buyer to his own; when, in ordinary everyday life, the average man instinctively acts on motives of unselfishness rather than of selfishness.

And when the national policy of any country is



guided more by considerations of universal benevolence than by domestic advancement. As a matter of fact, although many nations are ostensibly Christian, not one directs its foreign policy on Christian principles.

But it is not with groups, or communities, or nations, that I am just now engaged. It is with the individual man, woman, and child.

Political Economy is called a science. It is based on the following law: Every man will get all he can for himself with the least possible effort. Now fortunately there are some unselfish individuals to whom this does not apply; but there are not enough of them to impair the validity of the law. The foundation of selfishness, sin, is strong enough to bear the structure of a whole science.

It is safe to assume, leaving out the crooks and the professional swindlers, who, nevertheless, are quite numerous, that the ordinary affairs of respectable life are conducted on the axiom that every one will buy as cheaply as he can and sell as dearly as he can. This is so taken for granted, that whenever we see a man acting otherwise, we are surprised. I knew a druggist in New Haven, now with God, who used to tell his customers frankly, when they were about to buy of him something expensive, and he knew that in this instance he had something cheaper that was just as good, that they would do better to take the cheaper article. He was as bald as it is possible for a man to be; and one day, when

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an incipiently bald man came to him to buy a patent-medicine hair-restorer, and asked Mr. Spalding if it were reliable, the wise druggist asked him in return to consider the condition of the man he was addressing. His honesty and unselfishness were the talk of the town.

Did he fail in business? Far from it. His shop was always full of customers, who knew the reliability of the seller. He was a church-member who preached a sermon every day in the week.

Which leads me to the reflexion that although the majority of people believe that selfishness is the best way to get on in the world, they are in error. Christianity is against the selfish instincts of the human heart, but it is always in harmony with reason. It is always good sense.

Business standards are higher morally than ever before; more and more business men are realising the commercial value not only of honesty, but even of kindness and good will. Although I have a low opinion of the natural instincts of humanity, although I firmly believe in the corruption of the human heart, although I am under no sweet illusion that men and women are about-all-right anyhow, am I a pessimist? I am not.

The refreshing, encouraging, inspiring truth is this: that although men and women are naturally bad, every one of them can *become* good. It is not being, but becoming, that fills me with hope for the future of the race.

This is why the sight of a good man or a good woman, and I know many, is so stimulating. I know that it is never an accident. I know that in every single instance goodness has been won by a daily fight with the ever-active forces of evil. It is a victory; it is a triumph. And as human nature is naturally inclined toward evil, so it is capable of conquering it.

Jesus said, "It must needs be that offences come." It must needs be. It is of the essence of life and of conditions in this world. Jesus was never under any illusion about the natural goodness of men and things. His diagnosis was always accurate, always confirmed by facts.

The two great positive realities in this world are sin and pain. Evil and suffering are prime characteristics of humanity. I am sceptical of many things. I do not believe the half of what I hear, or one fifth of what I see in print. But I am certain of the positive, aggressive, sleepless force of evil in the world. I say it is active, not passive.

Suppose a gardener planted the seeds of flowers or of vegetables, and then left them alone. Would the result be satisfactory? It would not. Weeds, which come up and flourish without human effort, would destroy the place. It is only by incessant care, and struggling against the sinister forces of nature, that the man gets the crop he desires. In other words, evil things grow naturally; good things come only by vigilance and hard work.



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Suppose a man has a barrel of sound apples, and then places among them one rotten specimen. Does it not seem that in these days, when the world has been made safe for democracy, and where everything is settled by majority vote, that the hundreds of good apples ought to be able to outvote the one bad apple? Surely the healthful influence of so many should be able to counteract and overcome the destructive influence of one? But of course it is not so. The one rotten apple will make all the rest like unto itself.

How interesting it would be if good health were contagious! If one man, after successfully sustaining a thorough examination by a physician, and declared absolutely healthy, could, by walking down the aisles of a hospital, cure the sufferers—let them catch his health. It is unfortunate, but true, that there are no epidemics of health; the epidemics are concerned with disease. It will not do to subject a healthy community to one person suffering from an infectious illness.

No, evil is natural, positive, aggressive; as individuals and communities have been destroyed by disease germs, so whole nations have been destroyed by immorality and predatory selfishness.

Curiously enough, along with the bodily and positive fact of evil, we have the *mental* fact of Good. Every man and every child knows that Beauty, and Truth, and Goodness are valuable and desirable. Loveliness is instantly apprehended as better than



ugliness; accuracy and the correct way of doing things are instantly seen to be better than any lie or false method: virtue is instantly recognised to be better than vice.

I agree with the late Mr. Clutton-Brock that in education we lay too much stress on Obedience. In an army, at sea, and in emergencies, discipline and safety require immediate and uncompromising obedience. But in schools there are pupils whose rebellion against authority is based—even though they do not always know it—on a love for truth, beauty, and goodness. The regrettable but common opposition between artists and puritans, scientists and mystics, is quite often based on a misunderstanding, where both parties are really trying to follow the same ideals.

In order to see how naturally inclined to truth, beauty, and goodness is the *mind* of the average man, all one has to do is to see a drama in the theatre or a motion-picture. The sympathy of the spectators is invariably with the virtuous hero or heroine; they cannot bear to see him yield to temptation; and when the protagonist speaks noble, moral sentiments, he is often loudly applauded. Benavente, the Spanish dramatist, remarked, "One-fourth part of the morality, goodness, and sense of justice which an audience brings into the theatre, would, if left outside, make the world over into paradise."

Victor Hugo's hero, Jean Valjean, who after his conversion, led a life of moral grandeur and chronic

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self-sacrifice, is universally admired; thousands of pupils in schools and colleges vote for him as "the favourite character in fiction." But in real life, do they act like him? The universal tone of commencement addresses at the graduation exercises of schools and colleges is ideal. Honesty, purity, public service, unselfishness in private and business affairs are set forth as the correct standards of conduct. But are all school and college graduates exemplars of these qualities?

We instinctively know and applaud the Good; yet the strange fact is that we instinctively follow the Bad. The mind pulls one way, the body another. Temptation is always strongest when the need of resistance to it is greatest. Just as a man who has spoken a language incorrectly in his youth and has later learned to speak correctly, will, in moments of excitement or passion, revert to his dialect or to his errors, so even those who have been most carefully trained in character, will, in moments of stress, often go wrong. The Bible states the fact bluntly: "But it has happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."

When Faust was talking with his amanuensis Wagner (whom, by the way, Signor Croce greatly admires) the humbler man said he was entirely satisfied with the pursuit of learning. Faust regarded him as enviable, because there was no civil

war in his soul. With me, said the great Doctor, it is different. Two souls dwell together in my bosom: they are constantly struggling to be separated: one is elevating, the other degrading: I shall never be rid of this internal conflict.

In the seventh chapter of his letter to the Romans, Paul, in immortal phrases, expressed the same profound truth.

I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. . . . So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God: but with the flesh the law of sin.

*Struggle* is the essence of natural and mental life. All good things are accomplished only by fighting against evil forces. We may be damaged, we may be soiled, we may be scarred in this holy war, the only war that deserves the adjective; but the victory is worth the effort.

Realising our deficiencies, realising the humiliating difference between our belief and our behaviour, what shall we do? Nothing? Jesus said, It must needs be that offences come: meaning, that in a world like this, with human nature as it is, offences are certain to occur. But he added, Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

We have the opportunity to develop, to improve, and thus to make the world a little better than we found it. Nothing is more tragic, in a world so full



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of misfortune as this is, for any man to add to the burden. He is not much better than those ruffians who seize the opportunity of a great fire or a public disaster or an international war, to add to their own private gains. If we think we cannot accomplish any good, let us at least try not to increase the amount of evil. Even that aim will require constant vigilance, constant effort.

If we were naturally good, we should not need religion. If we were naturally virtuous, industrious, and reliable, we should not need restraining and corrective forces. How often does a mother in one day feel obliged to say to her children the one word *Don't!* Where should we be without parental training, without school discipline, without penalties, nay, without the police? Where was Boston?

Humanity needs every elevating influence and the most elevating influence in the world is the Christian religion. We need to be saved not once, but every day, because nobody is safe. Our Lord is the greatest Champion of the mind against the natural instincts; by following him, we follow the best we know.

Suppose an army set out to march through a hostile territory, and was warned of the danger of ambush; that army would be on the alert. In the eternal warfare between reason and instinct, between unselfishness and selfishness, the enemy is not outside, nor is there any remote or unusual danger to be feared. The enemy is encamped within, in



the heart of the citadel; *we are in danger all the time.*

There are innumerable instances of men and women, who have lived honourably, or at least inoffensively, till they are past the age of forty. Are they then safe? Is only youth the period of danger? The answer is found in the number who astonish their friends and acquaintances by suddenly "going wrong." "Why, I would have wagered anything that he was steady as a rock." Hamlet was astounded and horrified at the behaviour of his mother, not merely because he thought of her as a mother and not as a woman, a thought common to all sons, but because he supposed she had reached years of discretion. There are no years of discretion.

Rebellious hell,  
If thou canst mutine in a matron's bones,  
To flaming youth let virtue be as wax,  
And melt in her own fire: proclaim no shame,  
When the compulsive ardour gives the charge;  
Since frost itself as actively doth burn,  
And reason panders will.

There are those who laugh at the expression "miserable sinners." They deny indignantly the accusations which the Bible directs sweepingly at men and women in general. "I am not a viper: I am not a worm: I am not a sinner: I am a respectable citizen."

Well, what is original sin? Granting that you are free from the temptations of sensuality, lying,

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stealing, cruelty—a large admission—are you living up to your ideals? Are you as valuable to the community as you know you might be? Are you in every respect the man you would like to be? If not, you are, in the old phrase, living in a state of sin. For this is sin: to be aware of one's opportunities for doing good, and not to take them. No one has a right to be complacent or self-satisfied if one is not doing one's best. The irresistible conclusion is, that every man and woman is a sinner.

*Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

The knowledge of humanity displayed by Jesus, together with his wisdom, make me feel certain that he would not have appeared in this world if the world had not needed him. Does it need him today? Look at the world. Do you need him? Look in your heart.

## IV

### DEATH

I was six years old when my sister died. It was just at dawn, and I remember my mother rushing into the room where I was, and screaming frantically, "My God! My God!" I could not understand this, and turning to my father, I asked, "Papa, what makes Mama swear so?" and he told me she was not swearing, but praying in agony because she had lost her only daughter. My sister was nearly seventeen years older than I, and had taken care of me very often, so that she seemed more like a second mother than a sister. She had typhoid fever; it was a long illness; I had been taken to her bedroom, so that she might say Good-bye. But her death was a mystery to my childish mind; I saw her in the coffin; I went to her funeral in a state of excitement. It seemed to me incredible that she had disappeared from our home and family life, had become inaccessible. This was the first time I was brought face to face with the mystery of death. For death is as complete a mystery as life.

No one can enter or pass a graveyard without serious reflexions. To some it causes a momentary feeling of dismay, akin to physical discomfort; to

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others a whole train of thought is set in motion. To me the graveyard is not my own tragedy, nor the tragedy of those who lie there, not even of those who died young; the tragedy comes in the thought of the racking suffering represented by each grave, the all but intolerable agony in the minds of every little family group who were forced to stand and see the remains of some one inexpressibly dear committed to the ground. Thus every grave represents the grief and anguish of the living. It is not the thought of death—which is as natural as life—but the cruel thought of separation that makes the churchyard an accumulation of tragedies.

The difference between past physical and mental suffering is the difference between an enemy who has been conquered and an enemy who is in ambush. Physical suffering can be so acute as to dominate for a time both body and mind; it is absurd to say that physical suffering is good for us, when in reality it acts on the kingdom of the mind like a usurping tyrant, destroying both pleasure and activity. But when physical suffering departs, it is over and done with. A healed scar will not ache. About mental anguish there is something *insidious*; it may return at any moment, at unexpected times and in strange places. One may be resting placidly in fancied security, one may be sitting in agreeable conversation with friends, one may be laughing at a comedy in the theatre, and suddenly, without warning, the torture returns. All suffering is the enemy to happi-



ness; but mental grief is an alert foe, who at any moment may make a surprise attack.

Yet, even so, the agony of separation is reduced and softened by time. I have seen persons nearly insane with grief, in a state of frenzy. To look upon them at such a moment, one would not believe it possible that they could ever laugh again, or in any conceivable manner, enjoy existence; yet, meeting them after the lapse of time, one finds them in pleasurable activities, working, eating, laughing with their friends. The most difficult thing to imagine, when looking on a face disordered by grief, is to imagine that same face expressively *interested* in external affairs, news of the world, politics, athletics, and what not; yet in the course of time, the eyes and the mind return to normal things, and he who had no room in his thoughts except for the obsession of sorrow, is once more mentally active.

One of the most impressive things in Barrie's drama, *Mary Rose*, is the representation of the return to normality, of the domination of grief by interest in mundane affairs.

In Shakespeare's play, *King John*, Constance cries

Grief fills the room up of my absent child,  
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me,  
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,  
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,  
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form.

Yet eventually the things that give us the most anguish are turned by the strange alchemy of time

into golden reminiscence. At first one cannot bear to see anything that reminds one acutely of a friend who has died; but after the passage of healing time, one loves to dwell on those very details. I have seen members of a family, speaking of one long dead, smiling and saying, "Do you remember how she liked this?" that is to say, recalling with a feeling akin to pleasure the very details that in the early days of bereavement are unbearable.

We do not forget those we have loved, and we do not wish to forget them. It is astonishing how clearly we can recall them by the miracle of memory. They have absolutely and totally disappeared; they are as entirely beyond our physical reach as though they had never existed; but by a simple effort of memory, we see their faces, animated as they were in life by individual expression.

And it is interesting to remember that the formative influence of friends upon us is often much greater after their death than before. This is particularly true of parents. The young man thinks his father and mother are mistaken about life, he does not take their advice seriously, he says and does the things that shock and distress their minds. Years after he has lost them, he finds himself "coming around to their way of thinking," acting as they acted. They seem to reach out from the grave hands more potent than physical hands, and guide him in a manner impossible in life. In Brand Whitlock's novel, *J. Hardin and Son*, during the

lifetime of the father, there was civil war between him and his son; the latter enraged his stern father by continuous, active rebellion. Years after the old man had departed, his son found, much to his surprise, that he was behaving like his father, taking his father's viewpoint, looking at life through his father's eyes.

Even those of us who are surest of immortality, whose religious faith is most serene, cannot escape the pain of separation. If one goes to a pier on the departure of an ocean steamer, one will see many affecting scenes. As the ship moves away, there are those on shore who are crying and smiling at the same moment, waving their handkerchiefs and calling out good wishes. They would not bring their friends back if they could, but they cannot help feeling lonely. Now if we really had the faith that moves mountains, we should mentally say to dying friends, "Happy Journey!" as we do to those who travel abroad. But human beings simply cannot rise to such a level, and it is vain to make such demands on human capacity.

"No work begun shall ever pause for death," said Browning; and sometimes the influence of those who died young is greater than if they had lived long and successful lives. Consider Nathan Hale. He was sent into the British lines by Washington, in order that he might obtain information useful to the Continental Army. But he totally and ignominiously failed. I do not know of a more complete



failure in history than Nathan Hale. Instead of getting information, the British got him; and I have no doubt that when the rope was around his neck, his last and most bitter thought was not that he had to die so young, or that he would never see his sweetheart again, or that his own career was closed—the bitterest thought undoubtedly was that he was a failure. *What would Washington say?* He would say, “I wish I had sent an abler man, a man who could have accomplished something, not this incompetent bungler.” Now imagine what might have happened. Suppose Nathan Hale had succeeded, had returned in safety, with a mass of valuable information. Suppose as a result of his expedition, the American army had won a decisive battle; suppose Nathan Hale had eventually become a major-general, and after the war President of the United States, and had died at the age of eighty, full of years and honours. His direct influence on successive generations of Americans as a general officer, president, and statesman would not have compared in magnitude with his actual influence as a failure. Since the day of his ignominious death in the orchard, his personal influence on every American has been enormously stimulating and will continue to be so for centuries to come. He died a failure, but he died with glorious courage. So true it is that not length of years, or an accumulation of deeds, but personal character is what counts. “No work begun shall ever pause for death.”



Speculation on the future state is as old as human history. No one can help asking, Is death the end? Shall we live again? Is matter less destructible than spirit? If there is a future state, what will it be, and what part shall we play therein?

There has been an advance in the dignity of speculative thought. The Indians buried their warriors with bow and arrows, because their conception of heaven was one eternal happy hunting-ground. Some of the Northern races imagined that heaven was a place where men fought all day, and drank all night; because their chief earthly pleasures were fighting and drinking. There seems to have been no place for women in this Paradise. The Mohammedans imagined that heaven was a place of unlimited sensuality. Some of our Puritan forefathers seemed to believe that after death they would spend millions of years standing in white robes, holding palms in their hands, and singing "Worthy the Lamb!"

Now whatever the future state may be, it seems that it ought never to be static, but rather a place of continuous and infinite development. For the most striking difference between human beings and animals is the tremendous fact that all human beings have the capacity for development, something denied to mere animals. There is no reason a dog or a horse should live forever, because they reach the limit of fulfilment in this earthly existence. My dog, who is now nine years old, is clever in his canicular way; but if he lived to be seventy or seven

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thousand, he would be the same dog, no further advanced mentally than he is now. On the other hand, every child, no matter how elementary in intelligence, has in his infant mind possibilities of development so vast that literally eternity is not long enough to exhaust them. Not only does it seem a calamity that scholars, scientists, and inventors should die, and their steady advance come to an annihilating conclusion; the death of every individual—if it be the end—is a waste so appalling that the universe, from the human point of view, is turned into a farce. Life would then really be what Mark Twain said it was, the worst practical joke ever played.

Every human being has in his mind an infinite capacity for development. I want to live forever, because I know, that granted the one blessing of health, I should never find eternity tiresome. Even at this moment I have enough plans, desires, and interests to keep me steadily and cheerfully busy for several trillion years; and by that time I should certainly have accumulated enough new ideas to wish to continue. It is even more generally true of intellectual interests than it is of food that the appetite grows by what it feeds on. If the man who amasses money cannot stop, but is ever eager to acquire more wealth, the scholar, the student, the man of an enquiring mind, is even more eager to learn indefinitely, to obtain new experiences. Is it possible to imagine Shakespeare losing interest in human

nature? Can one imagine Edison ceasing to wish to make new inventions? Is it possible for one who has spent his earthly life in the pursuit of some form of knowledge, gladly to acquiesce in cessation? "The highest good is the growth of the soul."

The parable of the talents was directed against those who are content to make no advance; who receive the gift of mind without improving it. The greatest sin one can commit against one's own personality is the lack of ambition to enrich and improve it. For the aim of life is not merely to secure physical comfort, delightful as that is; the aim of life is to *grow*, and thus to fulfil to the uttermost possibilities.

Furthermore there is hope for immortality in the miracle of individuality, of personal identity. It is a cheering thought that although all human beings are alike in their bodily and mental sensations, enjoy the same pleasures, suffer from the same causes,—every individual person is a unit, who has never been matched in past ages, and whose replica will never appear on earth again. *There is no wider gulf imaginable than the gulf which separates one man from another.* Even in cases where sons resemble their fathers so noticeably that they have the same facial expression, the same trick of the voice, the same arm-gesture and bodily attitude in excitement or repose, the difference between such a son and such a father is wider than the space between East and



West. They resemble each other in many ways, but they are not even imaginably the same.

There is some comfort, I say, in this miracle of individuality. You may be poor, stupid, unsuccessful, unhappy; but there is one form of wealth that cannot be taken away from you—your own personality. The story of Peter Schlemihl was a tragic story, because when he sold his shadow, he sold a part of himself. Of all the billions of men or women that have walked the ways of earth, and of all the billions that will inhabit our planet to the end of time, you, you who read these words, are unique. You have a separate and inimitable personality.

Thus the waste of war cannot be reckoned in the loss of wealth or material things which can eventually be successfully duplicated; the untold waste of war consists in the removal from earth of an enormous number of irreplaceable personalities.

The evidences in Nature for the persistence of individual life after death are not sufficiently numerous or weighty to be convincing. The fact that man *wants* to live, that he can hardly imagine himself not living, that the whole scheme of the world becomes farcical without immortality are evidences of the *will* to live, of the instinct for existence, rather than of the fact itself. Of course there are plenty of happy analogies thrust upon our minds by Nature. The dying, rotting grain springing into life, which cannot indeed live at all unless it first dies; the apparently dead trees in Winter springing into a glory



of new life in the Spring. As we grow older, the Spring, which made little impression upon us in childhood, becomes a glorious and inspiring drama. Sometimes after a long winter and a cold March and April, the trees seem to burst out some May morning like an explosion; I have trembled in ecstasy in beholding them.

But to offset this, there is the most pessimistic thought which can ever visit a serious and contemplative mind; it is the appalling waste of Nature, the apparent indifference of Nature to the life and welfare of the individual. Through the passion for existence and the passion for reproduction Nature has abundantly provided for the continuation of the race, of the type; but for the welfare of the individual there is apparently no provision. It is ridiculous to talk about the survival of the fittest; for the truly fit-to-live have no more chance in a general epidemic, calamity, railway accident, earthquake, fire or cyclone, than those who are apparently not fit to live at all.

Let us not deceive ourselves with sentimentality or with cant. There is a vast amount of cant talked about death by those who have no belief in religion. I saw a book once called *The Eternal Life* and took it up with some hope. But all the author had to say was, that although the individual ceases to exist at death, we should be comforted by the thought that the Human Race goes on.

That the Human Race goes on is not necessarily

a cause for joy. Chekhov said that we comfort ourselves with the thought that we are sacrificing ourselves for posterity, that the next generations will be much happier and better; and then when the future generations arrive, they will say, "How unhappy we are! how much better it was in the good old times!"

But there is in reality no such thing as a Race, even when spelled with a capital. There is no such thing as racial happiness, any more than there is such a thing as national happiness. Happiness is exclusively concerned with the individual. The Human Race in itself is not a reality; it is simply a collection of individuals. There can be no individual happiness in racial immortality.

Either we live individually after death or we do not. If we really die, we are then as nonexistent as we were in the year 1768. A doctor and nurse stood by a dying man, and when he breathed his last, the nurse said, "Well, he knows all about it now." But if consciousness ceased with bodily death, he really knew less about it than before; for at any rate men who are alive can guess and speculate.

There is no room for immortality in this world. Death is a necessity in the economic order; and taking humanity as a whole, death is a fortunate necessity. The absolute certainty of death—for there is nothing more certain—casts a dark shadow over every human being, and exerts a profound influence on every life and character. From its dark

roots springs the bright flower of humility. How absolutely intolerable most persons would be if they knew they were not to die!

Death is the sharpest check to egotism, the heavy brake on passion, the chill on lust, the restraint on avarice, the eternal No to selfishness. What would become of the average run of men and women if a man like Napoleon were immortal? There have been many persons in history marked by a combination of towering ambition and colossal selfishness; the average man is never safe until such persons are dead.

The thought that every one of us must die creates in our hearts a healthy modesty, which is not only necessary for the proper development of our own personality and character, but which makes us tolerable to others. If we did not know that we must leave the earth and every earthly possession, we should all become insufferable; there would be no community on earth where it would be possible to live in peace.

In the Old Testament there is not much emphasis laid on the future life; it is in the religion of the Lord Jesus Christ where individual immortality, in some sphere of free and untrammelled development, is most greatly stressed. Christianity lays all its emphasis on the individual life—no religion has ever placed such a value on human beings. Not a sparrow falleth to the ground without your Father's notice—every hair of your heads is numbered. Jesus



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believed and taught that God was really our Father—that every one of His children was to Him inexpressibly precious. “Your Heavenly Father Knoweth.”

No one ever understood the human heart so profoundly as Jesus. Wherever we can test his ideas, so far as they relate to earthly activities and behaviour, he was always right. He spoke the truth. It is reassuring to remember that one who is accurate when his ideas can be subjected to verification, has a good chance of being right in his predictions.

Now Jesus was certain of personal immortality, of the persistence of the individual soul after death. About this matter he spoke with confidence. He was *sure* of the future—can we not follow where he leads? If we find all of his practical teaching wise, reasonable, and true, does it not help us to believe that he was not mistaken in other things?

I confess that my own hope of the future life is based on the personality of Jesus, on the Incarnation, on my belief that he revealed the Divine Idea to helpless and suffering and ignorant humanity.

There is no reason we should not entertain our minds with speculations about the nature of future mental activities after we have got rid of the body. It is my own individual hope, that as it is now possible to travel everywhere about this earth, after death it will be possible to travel all over the universe. Light travels two hundred thousand miles a second; but there is something that travels infinitely



faster than Light—it is Thought. When I speak to another man, and say the word *Sirius*, we both instantaneously travel from the earth to that particular star. Hence it is possible that after death, when the checks and hindrances to activity are removed, our individual spirits may actually travel as fast as thought. Such journeys would be interesting.

There is an innate pessimism in humanity shown in many ways and shown especially in this. There is no doubt that the chief reason why so many do not believe in immortality is not because the idea of immortality is foolish, but simply because "it is too good to be true." But if the revelation of God in Jesus Christ was a true revelation, nothing is too good to be true. Even as it is, his mere appearance on earth is the best thing that ever happened.

There is one result that should rise from the thought of death—it should make us more sympathetic, more kindly, more considerate, more warm-hearted. A ship's company become more easily and more informally acquainted than mere street crowds; and if there be danger, the artificial walls that separate human beings from one another vanish immediately. Now we ought to regard all humanity as a ship's company, for we are all travelling somewhere. Furthermore, we are all in danger. No one can tell what calamity or disaster may happen tomorrow.

When I was a young man, I had an accident, and was forced to walk on crutches for a month. I could

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not help noticing an obvious fact. Strangers in the street looked at me with a peculiar expression. There was a look of pity, sympathy, a desire to help on nearly every face I saw. That was because I was on crutches.

Let us remember that although only a very few show their wounds as I was forced to do, every man and woman has griefs and sorrows that are as real as if they were plain to see. Every man's soul is bleeding internally. Even the happiest people have troubles. Now as it is impossible to imagine any one kicking or striking me when I was on crutches—if any one had done so, he would have been called a monster—so we ought to be equally careful not to strike others in what may be their most sensitive spot. But there is an enormous amount of such cruelty happening every day.

I suppose no one has ever heard of a friend's death without acute remorse, without the bitter recollection either of injuries done to that friend or of opportunities for help that were missed. We always say, "If I had known he was going to die, I should have acted so differently." Well, why should we always be accumulating material for remorse and regret? *We do know.* We know that all our friends, acquaintances, and strangers are mortal. They will die. It is not necessary to bespatter them with officious sympathy, but it is the part of wisdom to treat every human being with delicate care. The soul is more sensitive than the

skin. If we cannot be of much use to those with whom we come in daily contact, we can at least try to avoid hurting them.

It is astonishing how grateful people are for a little sympathy and consideration. I can remember, after the lapse of fifty years, certain words and acts of kindness, and I shall cherish the memory of those people so long as I live.

In the midst of life we are in death. This is not only a chastening and sobering thought for the individual mind, it should have a daily influence on our conduct.

## V

### LIFE

When I was a small boy, camping out with some companions on the shore of Long Island Sound, word came to us late one afternoon that a young man had been drowned; and we were asked to look for his body. Accordingly we walked along the beach for miles, searching the surface of the water, knowing that somewhere he would come in with the flood tide. About nine o'clock in the evening, he was found. We entered a little hut, and there, fully dressed, lying on his back on a rough table, was the dead man. I have often read that every dead face has dignity. In this instance it was not so. He evidently had been an athlete; the knotted muscles in his arms and legs showed through his soaked clothes. But his face was half covered with sand, his body was twisted convulsively, as though he had died in a fierce struggle, and there was a look of almost petulant protest in his staring eyes. A magnificent young man had become a disfigured corpse. No use to speak to him; every connexion with human affairs was closed; he was dead.

There are, however, many active human bodies walking the streets, who, in various ways, are



mentally dead. A man to whom music means nothing, is musically dead—as dead as though he were already in the grave. A man to whom religion means nothing is spiritually dead.

Shortly after the miracle of the loaves and fishes, Jesus spoke to a multitude of curiosity seekers, taking for his subject the Spiritual Life. (I remember hearing Beecher dramatically describe the scene.) They had not the faintest glimmer of what he was talking about. He said,

my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.  
For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven,  
and giveth Life unto the world.

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread.

They were not expressing a pious wish, or saying anything that had religious significance. They wanted something to eat. If at that moment he had waved his hand, uttered some hocus-pocus, and made loaves of bread to appear, they would have eaten, and gone away completely satisfied.

Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead.

This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die.

I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.

The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? . . .

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Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? how is it then that he saith, I came down from heaven?

These words, which have since that day stimulated and inspired many millions, meant nothing to those who heard them. The listeners were bewildered. They could not understand, because they were spiritually dead. They understood food and drink, but not the hunger and thirst of the mind. Many of them left him altogether, and walked no more with him. But Jesus merely repeated with even more emphasis what he had already affirmed, as though he looked over and beyond that audience in Palestine to the countless generations of posterity, who would listen and understand and believe. Sometimes a teacher or a writer has to talk over the heads of his audience, in order to impress all the more deeply the men and women of the future. Jesus concluded his address by these words of absolute truth.

It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

With Jesus Spirit and Life meant the same thing.

Jesus was always talking about life. "In him was life." "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." "Ye search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life . . . but ye will not come to me that ye may have life."

What did he mean by Life?

Of course he believed in immortality, in existence after death. This belief is at the foundation of his religion and morality. But he did not mean that we should spend our time either waiting for the future life, or merely preparing for it. He knew we could have abundance of life here and now, and he wanted us to exchange poverty for wealth. It is the life within that can alone enrich personality. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of things which he possesseth. It does not consist in things at all.

It is sad to see so many people throw away their lives. It is sad to see so many people unhappy, not through poverty in money, food, clothing, shelter, but poverty in life. All about us, in city and country, there are dwarfed, stunted, narrow, cramped, commonplace, insignificant lives that ought to be enriched. People are lying down when they ought to be standing up; crawling when they should be walking.

The teaching of many of our realistic novelists, who often seem to be concerned only with the sordid aspects of life in villages and cities, is meant to convict us of sin. For every book, no matter how objective, has a moral lesson. Every artist is a teacher. They wish to make us ashamed of an existence filled only with pettiness, when it ought to be full of interest. Gorki said that in the tales of Chekhov, the great realist seemed to be saying to his characters, "It is shameful of you to live like this."

What Jesus taught was the *reality* of the life of the spirit. It is not a myth: it is not an illusion: it is not a dream: it is not only as real a life as the physical existence, it is more intense. We must divest spirituality of shopworn sanctimonious phrases, that have lost their hitting power, and come back to the thrilling words of Jesus, who himself lived the life of the spirit.

The best thing that can happen to a man or woman in this world is to grow, to develop; after physical maturity is reached, this growth can be only through the mind and spirit. It is a natural and tranquil growth, which is accomplished only by fulfilling certain conditions, by making the right connexion. It cannot be attained by doing some tremendous deed, or going through some exciting emotional experience. Nor can it come through spasms of sudden effort, nor through constant anxiety—"taking thought."

Jesus lived in the country and in small settlements. He referred often to flowers and plants. He loved them, and taught from his observation this lesson: we cannot grow by worry or even by hard work. No poet ever spoke more beautifully of anything than Jesus spoke of the gorgeous lilies of Palestine.

A plant grows *all the time*, though no one has ever seen it grow. So with the life of the spirit. We cannot grow merely by going to church on Sunday, or by feeling religious only when we are in danger, or when some member of the family dies.



The farmer does not *make* things grow. He simply gives them a chance. He improves the soil, removes obstacles, and endeavours to continue the connexion between the plant and the source of life. For if we understood what makes the plant grow, we should, as Tennyson says, know what God and man really are.

"God plants us where we grow," said Pompilia. Now this may not be where we are most comfortable. It is pleasant to be physically comfortable, in bodily ease, but if the growth of the mind is truly more important than the pleasure of the body, then it may in the long run be better for us to have difficulties, hardships, pains, worries, frustrations, privations, and disasters. Some may grow better in prosperity; others in rougher circumstances. The important thing is to grow. Nearly all the intellectual work of the world, nearly all the world's contributions to art, letters, and music, have been made in a bad climate. God plants us where we grow.

Pompilia spoke of a well-meaning reformer, who, seeing a rose on a bush close to the roadside, and knowing that it was in imminent danger of destruction from any careless passer, took the rose, and carefully placed it at the top of a tree, where it would be in security. But there it died. In Hawthorne's *Snow Image*, the children's father, with the best intentions, placed the Snowchild in front of the warm fire, where it could be as comfortable as they.

The spiritual climate of this world is harsh; but robust hearts thrive on it. They grow.

As some people have more physical vitality than others, so some have more spiritual vitality. Some have tremendous spiritual vitality, whether they are lean in body like an ascetic, or fat. When there is complete loss of appetite, and one does not care for food, we know that person is physically ill. He needs nourishment. So those who have given up reading the Bible and daily prayer and going to church and thinking about God, whose daily existence is stuffed full of ephemeral affairs, they become spiritually sick.

The body interests more people than the mind, because bodily wants and bodily pleasures are universal. The most rudimentary roustabout and the most intellectual lady both have to eat and sleep. Both know the value of food, warmth, shelter. But although there are a hundred men who love meat to one who loves music, that does not prove that the love of music is a myth, or that it does not give happiness to those who cultivate it.

Bodily sensations interest more people than the things of the mind. Mental pleasures interest more people than the things of the soul. In living the spiritual life, however, one does not lose either mental or bodily capacity. Jesus came to give us abundance of life—that we might live with bodily gusto, with intellectual curiosity, with spiritual fervour. In other words, that we might have per-

sonal vitality: that we might in a month live longer than many live in a year. If daily life be interesting, one cannot be altogether unhappy.

The average man recognises instantly the difference between life and death. But if the average man were forced to define the word *Existence*, he would not find it immediately easy to do so in a satisfactory manner. The best definition of Existence was given by the philosopher Lotze. He said, *To Be is to be in Relations*.

A dead body has no relations with anything perceptible. It cannot hear what we say to it, or see the sunlight, or vote, or read the newspapers, or show any sensitiveness to heat or cold or any stimuli. That is why we know it to be dead.

If to be is to be in relations, then the more relations our minds have, the more vividly are we alive. A man who takes an interest only in his business is alive only that much. A man who takes an interest in his business, in world-politics, in music, in art, in astronomy, in literature, in athletics, is a hundred times more alive than the other, who is hardly more than an efficient machine. Every time a man learns a foreign language, or acquires a new interest, he widens his relations, and increases his vitality. He lives more. Roosevelt had enormous vitality, because he was keenly interested in things as far apart as naval warfare and singingbirds. Everything in the world interested him, and his connexions with life were numerous.



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The more friends we have, the more we live. A man dies as often as he loses a friend, said Bacon; a relation with life was cut off; so far as that friend went, one died with him. But if that is true, it is also true that every time one makes a new friend, one gains new life.

Thus for a man to be interested only in one thing, or to live a solitary and selfish life, isolated from society, is to live meanly as well as wickedly. His vitality is low. He needs spiritual nourishment. Of all vital forces for the enriching of life from within, religion is the most effective. The kingdom of God is within you.

Furthermore, if we do not keep growing, if we do not improve, we cannot stand still. We cannot merely keep what we have got. For there is a law—the law of deterioration. Even if one takes the greatest care of things, they do not stay new and fresh. The new dress, the new house, the new automobile, do not stay new. Immediately they begin to decay. If one owns a motor-car, one does not need to have an accident to have the car lose in value; no disaster is necessary. Mere time is sufficient; ordinary wear and tear. One can no more keep one's possessions fresh and new than one can preserve one's youth. People do not need to have a railway accident, or a severe illness, or a major operation to lose what good looks they have. Time writes on one's face and body with an indelible hand,



and the more one tries to erase this by artifice, the more is the emphasis added to the natural work of time.

Fortunately the life of the spirit need not decay with the life of the body. With proper nourishment, by keeping in relations with the necessary influences, the life of the spirit can steadily develop even as the body deteriorates. This is the reason that the sight of an old man or an old woman with a vigorous mind, a fresh heart, and a high spirit is so inspiring. It is an example that all can follow. Perhaps the real secret of life is this: while the body is growing worse, to have a constantly developing mind and a golden heart. Is it possible to have the mature mind of a man and the heart of a boy? It is.

Wordsworth, in his *Ode on the Intimations of Immortality*, deplored the fact that as we advance in years from childhood, our minds harden and coarsen, are less sensitive to beauty and to nature, become in fact, dulled. He seemed to believe that not only do we live after death, but that we came from as glorious an existence as that to which we are destined. Our earthly life is a barren land between two oceans of eternity. He explained the radiant loveliness of childhood by its reflexion of the light of that immortal country whence the child came; then, as we grow older, we become more callous, more deaf to heavenly voices, more blind to celestial visions.

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There is something inexpressibly lovely about children. The soft hair, the brilliant eyes, the radiant skin, shining as if there were some light behind it, the fresh innocence and trusting confidence of the mind. There is an inescapable sadness in gazing at a child, and thinking not merely of the decay of its bodily beauty, but of the coarsening and hardening process which its mind must experience. The horrible words it will hear, the disgusting sights it will see, the harshness and cruelty it will experience, the general roughness associated inevitably with earthly existence. It is like seeing some beautiful picture blurred by a coarse hand. Wordsworth has expressed all this in his great poem.

There was a time when meadow, grove, and stream,  
The earth, and every common sight,

To me did seem

Apparelled in celestial light,  
The glory and the freshness of a dream.  
It is not now as it hath been of yore;—

Turn wheresoe'er I may,

By night or day,

The things which I have seen I now can see no more.

The Rainbow comes and goes,

And lovely is the Rose,

The Moon doth with delight

Look round her when the heavens are bare,

Waters on a starry night

Are beautiful and fair;

The sunshine is a glorious birth;

But yet I know, where'er I go,

That there hath passed away a glory from the earth.

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:  
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,  
Hath had elsewhere its setting,  
And cometh from afar:  
Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God, who is our home:  
Heaven lies about us in our infancy!  
Shades of the prison-house begin to close  
Upon the growing Boy,  
But He beholds the light, and whence it flows  
He sees it in his joy;  
The Youth, who daily farther from the east  
Must travel, still is Nature's Priest,  
And by the vision splendid  
Is on his way attended;  
At length the Man perceives it die away,  
And fade into the light of common day.

Yet, even in the rough give-and-take of mature life, even in the absorption of daily cares and worries, there are moments, exceptional moments, when we hear the divine whisper, and see the heavenly vision.

Hence, in a season of calm weather,  
Though inland far we be,  
Our Souls have sight of that immortal sea  
Which brought us hither,  
Can in a moment travel thither,  
And see the Children sport upon the shore,  
And hear the mighty waters rolling evermore.

The inevitable course of human existence supplies one reason for the necessity of the life of the spirit.

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Although the body grows worse, although the mind is hardened and toughened by daily contact with affairs, the life of the soul may yet remain fresh and beautiful. We must keep the connexion between our hearts and the Divine Ideal. In this way, and in this way alone, can one live the spiritual life.

Time that can and must be snatched from the importunate struggle for existence, should be spent in keeping the overhead connexion free. The life of the spirit can be nourished and stimulated like any other life. And those happy moments, of which Wordsworth speaks, will more frequently occur.

Jesus put the spiritual life first. Your Heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of food and drink and clothing; but don't spend all your time and thought on those things! Never was there such a craze about food and drink as now; so that it seems, as if Jesus in saying ironically *What shall we eat? What shall we drink?* were thinking especially of us. Thousands are completely absorbed in "dieting," in this or that method of hygiene. Millions are engaged in the hopeless undertaking of trying to look young. Jesus gave earthly affairs their proper emphasis; but he put the spirit—the only thing that distinguishes humanity from beasts—first.

His remark to the sufferer from paralysis is illuminating. They brought to him one sick of the palsy, the word meaning in the old translation exactly the opposite of what it means today. The invalid was not shaking; he could not move at all.



He was paralysed. The crowd awaited the words of Jesus with intense curiosity. How acute their disappointment, how sharp their disdain, when he said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee!" They thought it was his legs, not his soul, that required attention. Jesus read their hearts, as on earth he would now read the hearts of those who wish to turn churches into soup-kitchens.

Many people today ridicule religious ideas, because they know nothing of spiritual values. But even if the poor all had bathtubs, sanitary plumbing, better material surroundings, would they then be perfect? Are bodily comforts Life, or merely the means of life?

To be carnally minded, said Paul, is death. The seeds of death are in every body and in every earthly enterprise. To be spiritually minded, said Paul, is life and peace. Peace is worth having.

That incomparable literary artist, John Bunyan, drew a picture of a man with a muckrake.

This done, and after those things had been somewhat digested by Christiana and her company, the Interpreter takes them apart again, and has them first into a room where was a man that could look no way but downwards, with a muckrake in his hand. There stood also one over his head with a celestial crown in his hand, and proffered him that crown for his muckrake; but the man did neither look up nor regard, but raked to himself the straws, the small sticks, and dust of the floor.

Christiana saw the meaning: "This is the figure of a man of this world, is it not, good sir?"

It is interesting to observe that not only was the man so deeply interested in trivial affairs that he did not observe the heavenly; he had worked so long with his muckrake that now he could not see the crown, even if he wanted to; for his eyes could look only downward. He had actually destroyed the capacity to live the life of the spirit.

He was very busy, but he was not truly living. He was one who might conceivably gain the whole world and lose his life.

It is difficult in modern environment to keep the spiritual life glowing, but it can be done. Many have fled away to inaccessible mountains, to lonely towers, to complete isolation; but they carried themselves along, and the struggle between the temporary and the eternal went on just the same. Modern activities, though they are likely to smother the flame of the spirit, are not necessarily opposed to it. To the spiritual mind nothing is more accessible than God. To the discerning eye, there is as much poetry in the streets of New York as in snow-clad mountains. The beauties of Nature are wherever we are, if we look for them. I have seen as splendid sunsets in the city as in the country; and the most beautiful rainbow I ever beheld spread its glory for me as I sat on the top of a London omnibus, rolling through a squalid street. How glad I am that my eyes were not so constituted as to be able to look only downward!

The true mystic—and every human being should

be a mystic at heart—is never far from God. We can live the life of the spirit as well in summer as in winter, in city and country, in Europe and in America. Even though we travel away thousands of miles, we are never far from those we love. Their presence is more real to us than the scenery outside the train windows. Sometimes it seems as if we were united to home and friends by an elastic band—the farther we go, the tighter it pulls.

Once having lived the life of the spirit, we do not mean to lose it, for we know that it is the only thing that stands any chance to survive the final catastrophe of death. The worldly things we set our hearts upon are perishable; but if we are connected with something eternal, we may share its indestructibility. Nor does a hearty, sensible, devoted spiritual life diminish one's enjoyment and appreciation of the beautiful and interesting things in this world. Just the contrary: spiritual capacity gives direction and significance to every form of life.

Twelve days before he died, the poet Coleridge wrote this letter to his godchild:

I, too, your godfather, have known what the enjoyment and advantages of this life are, and what the more refined pleasures which learning and intellectual power can give; I now, on the eve of my departure, declare to you, and earnestly pray that you may hereafter live and act on the conviction, that health is a great blessing; competence, obtained by honourable industry, a great blessing; and a great blessing it is, to have kind, faithful, and loving friends and relatives; but that the greatest of all

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blessings, as it is the most ennobling of all privileges, is to be indeed a Christian.

Coleridge was not only a poet, he was perhaps the most acute, subtle and profound critic in English literature. He saw into the very spirit of every work he regarded, and interpreted its inmost meaning. Was it not the exercise of this same accurate faculty of criticism that enabled him, even as he separated wheat from chaff in literature, to fasten in life upon the one thing of supreme importance?

It is perhaps impossible to make the reality of the spiritual life clear to those who are spiritually dead; but those who honestly and sincerely experience it would no more exchange it for anything else than Beethoven would have bartered music for material prosperity.



## VI

### TRUTH

In a poem by Browning, called *A Woman's Last Word*, it is evident that there has been a quarrel between husband and wife, in which each has spoken frankly—which seldom means pleasantly—to the other. This exchange of candour has brought them both near the irreparable tragedy of separation. Fortunately the wife is the first to see the gulf toward which they are slipping; and after comparing their folly in fighting to the spectacle of two small birds bickering on a bough, while overhead the hawk awaits the moment to swoop, she asks this question:

What so false as truth is,  
False to thee?

Now nothing can be falser than the truth, provided we distinguish between the truth of accuracy and the truth of loyalty. For truth is not only many-sided, but truths may actually differ in kind as well as in degree. Suppose you told your neighbours the worst thing that you know about your best friend; and suppose he, on hearing of this, remonstrated angrily with you; and suppose your defence was that you had told nothing but the truth. Would that justify

you? By no means. You have told accurately what you know of your friend's faults; but in doing so, you have been false to him and to the ideal of friendship. You, in speaking only the truth, have been untrue. Disloyalty is as black a sin as lying.

Suppose a professor in a university, or a teller in a bank, or a deacon in a church, or a soldier in an army, went about telling publicly only the weak or evil things that exist in the organisation. Would he give a correct picture of general prevailing conditions, and would he be true to the cause which he is employed to help and defend? To those who have no sense of precision, and no love of the actual truth, there is here no problem at all. The average man praises his town, his business, his church, his society, and feels no qualms. But to those who hate to say the thing which is not true, to those who love the absolute truth, a terrible problem confronts them in times of stress; shall they state what they know to be exact conditions, and thus become disloyal, or shall they suppress certain facts in order to be true to an organisation?

During the World War, the vast majority of citizens in every country had no problem of this kind. They simply supported their own country in the struggle, believing apparently that she was one hundred per cent right and the enemy one hundred per cent wrong. But in every country there was a small minority whose eyes were not clouded by partisanship; their lot was not enviable.

Furthermore, to take concrete instances, during this same war there were a few Americans who kept harping on the antagonism shown to the United States in past years by Great Britain. They were remonstrated with as traitors; and when they said that their remarks were true, the statement was not denied, but it was insisted that now when America and England were united in a life-and-death struggle against Germany, it was necessary to say nothing that would tend to lessen the efficiency of the allies.

I repeat that those few who love accuracy as a miser loves money, find themselves in wartime faced by one of the most difficult problems that can oppress an honest and candid mind; how far shall I sacrifice the truth of precision to the truth of loyalty? Happy are those perhaps to whom such questions never come; but clear-eyed people suffer when reason is eclipsed by passion. Still, this is only one of the great problems of life. To every man who is both honest and loyal, daily existence is full of problems, which must be met and solved with that limited ability with which human nature is endowed. Sometimes what looks like cowardly compromise is really the resultant of two forces working in a noble mind.

Mere precision is not only often disloyal, it is sometimes sadly misrepresentative of actual conditions. Mark Twain said that the surest way to convey misinformation was to tell the exact truth. The best story illustrating this is where the captain



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of a ship wrote in the log, "Mate was drunk today." When the mate became normal, he was terribly chagrined and angry; he pled with the captain; he declared that he had never been drunk before, that he would never drink again. But the captain said that he had set down in the log only the truth. Then the mate begged to have the record struck out, because it would mean his ruin when they arrived in port; he would never be able to get a berth again. The captain was inexorable—"in this log we write the exact truth." Next week the mate kept the log, and he wrote "Captain was sober today." It was the exact truth.

There is a flourishing and popular philosophy known by the name "as if." This tells its adherents that although they may not believe in God, or in the story of Jesus Christ, or in any objective reality in religion, they should all act *as if* these things were true. Those who can really be satisfied with such a philosophy are as deficient intellectually as those who can see nothing wrong with their country, business, and family. The majority of honest men cannot be either satisfied or stimulated by such a doctrine.

Paul knew better. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." When one is a child, it is well enough to swallow myths, fairy tales, and illusions; but when one becomes a man, one cannot be satisfied with childish things.



Shall we be true to ourselves or true to an ideal? No man ever made any real progress along the right road by being true to himself. No one rises in the moral or spiritual world except by trying to be true to something outside himself. Is the shipman true to himself, or true to the chart and compass? Is the builder true to himself, or true to the drawn plan?

Consider for a moment some universally known advice which an aged father gave to his son, in which the climax is reached in the injunction to be true to himself. Polonius said to Laertes,

Give thy thoughts no tongue,  
Nor any unproportion'd thought his act.  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Those friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel. . . .  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be: . . .  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice: . . .  
This above all: to thine own self be true,  
And it shall follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

The most subtle remark ever made concerning Polonius was uttered by Coleridge: "Polonius is the personification of the memory of wisdom no longer possessed." This speech to his son, on the latter's departure from home, is the residuum of worldly prudence lying in the old man's brain like stagnant water.

These precepts are recited at school, learned by

heart and approved today, as though they contained the essence both of wisdom and morality.

As a matter of fact they contain little wisdom and no morality. They represent the quintessence of selfishness. They imply only a regard for consequences, instead of uncalculating nobility of conduct. John Stuart Mill said that a man's love of the truth should always be greater than his fear of consequences. This is a stiff doctrine, because it has the inflexibility of the ideal.

Polonius's advice to Laertes sounds like the advice of a shrewd and socially successful college Senior to an ambitious Freshman. It is concerned entirely with "getting on." Wear the right clothes, don't talk much, pick your friends with the greatest care. Don't say anything, don't go anywhere, don't do anything, without first considering what effect these things will have on your progress toward popularity. For those whose religion is Success, for those to whom discretion is the better part of valour, for those whose cardinal virtue is Prudence, the words of Polonius will seem wise and fine. But great souls know there is something better than "getting on," something finer than success, and many virtues grander than prudence.

Sometimes it seems as if the most despicable man in the world were the canny man. Canniness is often a vice masquerading as a virtue. The shrewdly calculating individual may be envied by the down-trodden and unfortunate, but he is not nearly so

fine as a generous, lovable, unselfish man, even though the latter may be and is more easily deceived.

But let us look at the famous and climactic conclusion of the paternal precepts of Polonius:

This above all: to thine own self be true,  
And it shall follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man.

Fortunately for the truth, we know what happened; we know exactly whither the following of this advice led Laertes. We know therefore that the last line is a lie. Laertes was true to himself, true to his own nature; and instead of this truth-to-self making it impossible for him to be false to any other man, he was false to Hamlet, whom he betrayed and murdered by a cowardly trick. Being true to himself led him into a quagmire of falsehood, deceit, and treachery, ending in his own ruin.

The love of truth is the intellectual passion of the twentieth century; in this respect, the present age, with all its sins, is nearer ultimate morality, nearer true religion, nearer God, than any other period. There is always something noble about truth-lovers; there is something inexpressibly sublime about those who have died for what they believe to be true. The pursuit of truth elevates every scientist and every mystic. The old saying is a fine one—if God held in his right hand all truth, and in his left hand the search for it, I would take the left.



But even the love of truth requires for its justification a philosophical or religious basis. Mere love of truth cannot be made into a religion. It won't work. It becomes as sentimental and undemonstrable as a superstition. I have heard noble-minded men, who yet do not believe in God or the Bible or the Christian religion, say that we must follow the truth, no matter whither it leads us. Even though the pursuit of truth should lead us into misery, and sorrow, and destruction, still we must follow it. I asked one of these men, for whom I had high respect, "Do you believe in religion?" The answer was negative. "Do you believe in the future life?" Again, No.

Hence his uncompromising deification of truth, however brave and noble, cannot be successfully defended. If the word God has no meaning, and there is no future life, it is not consistent or reasonable to say that every man should follow the truth even if it lead him into disaster. Such advice is merely sentimental. But those who believe in God and that He rules this world can honestly and fearlessly believe in and follow the truth, no matter how much they may suffer by such a course; for they believe that God and truth are identical, and that the steady pursuit of truth brings them ever nearer to God. Every Christian has a philosophical reason for loving the truth.

A man without any religion or definite philosophy would be foolish to sacrifice his life for what he be-



lieved to be true. If his only guide is common sense, he should preserve his health and comfort at all hazards. Thus I perfectly understand why George Moore remarked that of all the futile persons in the history of the world, the religious martyrs were the most futile; and I not only understand but approve of the position taken by H. L. Mencken, who said that rather than suffer torture or death, he would cheerfully subscribe to any religious or political creed, no matter how absurdly untrue he secretly believed it to be. I mean that from his standpoint of pure common sense, such a position is more defensible than that of one who without any faith or any religious hope insists that we should all suffer and die for the truth. Why should we?

Religion is not only a comfort to those who are old, and poor, and sick; it is the only thing that gives significance to daily living.

The mind guided by reason and the love of truth has certain sources of satisfaction which are not to be confused with intellectual snobbery. This satisfaction was well expressed by Lucretius, who is quoted in Bacon's famous essay as follows: "It is a pleasure to stand upon the shore, and to see ships tossed upon the sea: a pleasure to stand in the window of a castle, and to see a battle and the adventures thereof below: but no pleasure is comparable to the standing upon the vantage ground of truth (where the air is always clear and serene) and to see the errors, and wanderings, and mists, and tempests,

in the vale below : so always (adds Bacon) that this prospect be with pity, and not with swelling or pride. Certainly, it is a heaven upon earth, to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in providence, and turn upon the poles of truth."

What it took a combination of two massive minds to say in a whole paragraph was expressed better by Jesus Christ in one sentence.

*Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.*

A knowledge of the truth emancipates us from the slavery of fear, ignorance, error, superstition, and passion. Those who dwell in ignorance and in error are under bondage. The history of humanity is the history of error, folly, and delusion. The warfare of science with religion is a favourite subject, and those who discourse upon it usually take pleasure in pointing out the crimes committed in the name of religion. Every one knows that the history of religion is largely the history of superstition, ignorance, intolerance, and cruelty; but is this the fault of religion or of humanity? The history of science is no more flattering than the history of religion. No one admires scientific men and physicians more than I; but just as the history of religion is largely the history of its bastard sister, superstition, so the history of medicine is largely the history of quackery; the remedy was often worse than the disease. A patient lay in bed suffering tortures, while the doctors gathered around him with astrological charts, and

gave him treatment whose only redeeming feature was that it shortened his life and hence put an end to his sufferings. Until comparatively recent times patients were bled when they needed blood, and I myself can easily remember when those suffering from tuberculosis were confined in rooms without a breath of fresh air, when fresh air was the one essential aid toward recovery. Shall we therefore condemn the science of medicine? By no means. The history of religion and the history of science indicate the gradual disengagement of mankind from error, folly, and delusion; the moment man knew the truth, that moment he was free.

Ignorance is slavery, truth is freedom. To an ignorant savage a total eclipse of the sun may be a hideous terror, while to an enlightened individual it is an incomparably beautiful spectacle.

The finest tribute ever paid to the power of truth is in the first book of Esdras in the Apocrypha, where three men compete for the prize, which is to be awarded to him who can name the strongest thing in the world. The first said, Wine is the strongest, and gave excellent illustrations; the second said, The King is the strongest, and gave many instances; the third said, Woman is the strongest, but above all things Truth beareth away the victory. Truth is not only more convincing than anything else, it has a power of endurance greater than anything else in the world.

When Jesus stood before Pilate, he had no fear,



because he knew that the truth would last longer than the Roman Empire.

Pilate asked him if he were really the king of the Jews, and Jesus answered

My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence.

Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

The Roman governor did not understand Jesus; but is he understood today by kings, presidents, emperors, governors, potentates, and diplomats? Pilate naturally thought that the best way to settle any disputed question was by force; and that if you had enough force, you could conquer and keep the whole world indefinitely in submission.

Jesus came into the world as a representative of something mightier than physical force and more enduring than armies and navies—the truth. The universe is based on the law of moral and spiritual truth, and while those who fight it, like Napoleon, may not be so instantly defeated as they would be if they fought the law of gravitation, they will certainly be defeated in the end. Truth can never be suppressed by force, although the experiment has been tried.

Jesus was a physically helpless prisoner, who



stood in unarmed isolation before a governor who represented the whole force of the Roman Empire; but Jesus was tranquil, because His own kingdom was built on an unshakable foundation—the truth. Empires are mortal. Where is the Roman Empire today? My own feeble individual life has embraced the history of the once puissant German Empire. I was born before the German Empire was established and I am living after its dissolution. Empires may be strong, but they don't last.

Pilate did not understand Jesus when he said that he was a witness to the truth, nor did he understand him when he said that his kingdom was not of this world. How could there be a kingdom not of this world? And how could any kingdom maintain its ascendancy or even its existence without fighting? But Jesus said that if his kingdom were of this world, then would his servants fight; the reason he had no army and navy at his back was because his kingdom could not advance and maintain itself by force, it could not oppress men from without, but must work its way silently through the hearts of individuals. The kingdom of God is what Jesus taught us to pray for, in the phrase, "Thy Kingdom come." And it is coming.

As indicated by the answer of Jesus to Pilate, the kingdom of God has laws and rules different from those that govern earthly kingdoms, empires, and republics. Love and goodwill take the place of fear and compulsion; those who make the most ex-

tensive conquests for this kingdom must make the largest sacrifices. The enemy is not overcome by superior force, he is disarmed by kindness; he is turned not into a more formidable foe, or into a captive raging with resentment, he is turned into a permanent member of the league. For the real and only lasting league of nations is the Christian Church.

The Christian method is not only the opposite of predatory; it does not concern itself even with scrupulous justice. It never says, How much can I get? or, How much do you owe me? But How much can I give? Christianity begins where justice, legality, and respectability leave off.

"My kingdom is not of this world." Jesus founded a society, which has rules of its own, and we are all invited to join. To become a Christian, one may or may not believe in a system of dogmas; one may or may not have a certain theory as to the creation of the world and the origin of man; these things are subordinate. Jesus did not say that we must subscribe to all the articles in a written creed—he said, *Follow me*. It cannot be insisted or emphasised too often that Christianity is a personal religion; it does not concern itself with an attitude toward history, science, or theology, but with devotion to a Leader, who walked and talked in Palestine. One qualifies for this society by loving, believing in, and trying to follow Jesus—he was not a creed, but a person.

Just as secret societies have certain rules that the members pledge themselves to obey and observe, just as an American will do certain things and not do certain things because he is an American, so the true followers of Jesus will endeavour to live up to the laws of his kingdom. One should endeavour to regulate one's daily life and activities by that and that alone. If we could do this, there would be less glaring inconsistency between what we profess and what we perform. If we submitted every course of action to that test! "I am a Christian—this means that I must do certain things and must not do certain things." The less we talk about it and the more we live up to it, the greater will be our influence. There is no propaganda, there is no advertising, that compares with conduct.

"To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." Ultimate truth has never been revealed to mankind, possibly because the search for it is more necessary to man's development than the knowledge of it. As we grow older, we make less and less demands on life and on knowledge. The child cries for the moon, the youth wants the earth, but the old man is content with less. So in the vast fields of knowledge. The most dogmatic and confident people should always be young. Wise old men are never intolerant. Intolerance is the green fruit of the intellect; it springs from ignorance plus assur-



ance. The intellect should ripen in mellow old age. Then we discover that there is no such thing as the possession of absolute truth any more than there is absolute liberty.

Jesus came as a witness to the truth, but he did not give us complete truth—only enough to shape our course.

Keep thou my feet: I do not ask to see  
The distant scene: one step enough for me.

We do not know much about the future life, but we know the best way to live here and now. The difference between absolute and practical knowledge is illustrated by two pilots. One, who was hired to take a vessel out of a harbour was asked if he knew every rock in the estuary, and he replied confidently that he did. No sooner had he spoken than the boat struck a rock, and he said, "There's one now." Another pilot, on another occasion, on being asked the same question, said he did not know where the rocks were. "Then how can you take out the boat?" He replied, "I know the channel."

After all, while the knowledge of ultimate truth is hidden from us, and theological and philosophical dogmas are in reality nothing but guesswork, practical truth, the best course of action, the channel of progress for individuals, societies, and nations, has been revealed by Jesus Christ.

"Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." I do not believe that Jesus shouted that speech. I



think he spoke quietly as one speaks from knowledge. The louder one yells his beliefs, the more uncertain is he of their truth. He is roaring to convince himself or to impose his opinions on others. Certainty begets serenity.

In one of George Herbert's most beautiful poems, *The Collar*, he represents himself as in rebellion against the rules of the kingdom of God. I will not sacrifice myself so much, I will do as others do, I will enjoy the pleasures of the senses, I will have my own way, I will this and I will that:

I struck the board, and cry'd, No more!

I will abroad.

What? Shall I ever sigh and pine?

My lines and life are free, free as the roe,

Loose as the winde, as large as store.

Shall I be still in suit?

Have I no harvest but a thorn

To let me bloud, and not restore

What I have lost with cordiall fruit?

Sure there was wine

Before my sighs did drie it. There was corn

Before my tears did drown it.

Is the yeare onely lost to me?

Have I no bayes to crown it?

No flowers, no garlands gay? All blasted?

All wasted?

Not so, my heart! But there is fruit,

And thou hast hands,

Recover all thy sigh-blown age

On double pleasures. Leave thy cold dispute

Of what is fit and not. Forsake thy cage,

Thy rope of sands,

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Which pettie thoughts have made, and made to thee  
Good cable, to enforce and draw,  
And be thy law,  
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.  
Away! Take heed;  
I will abroad.  
Call in thy death's head there. Tie up thy fears.  
He that forbears  
To suit and serve his need  
Deserves his load.  
But as I rav'd and grew more fierce and wilde  
At every word,  
Me thought I heard one calling, *Childe!*  
And I reply'd, *My Lord.*

Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. In the midst of the tumult of prejudices, and passions, and hatreds, and selfish desires, we may hear the quiet voice speaking the truth. As the voice of Jesus calmed the stormy waves of Galilee, so his voice of truth can calm the tempestuous passions of the human heart. Error and evil desire cannot live if we listen to the truth.

Jesus knew that Pilate had dominion over his body, and that his body could be crucified; but he knew that Pilate could not destroy the truth. Thus while we can never attain the complete serenity of the Master, we can have the assurance that no matter how dark the world may look, or how many discouragements there may be for the cause of Christianity, the truth to which Jesus bore witness will ultimately prevail.

It is the fashion now to ridicule Browning for saying

God's in his Heaven  
All's right with the world!

But what is meant by that poem is simply this. The sun rises; everything in the world takes its appointed place: the lark's on the wing: the snail's on the thorn: the hillside's dew-pearled. Just as surely as this is an orderly natural and physical universe, where things take their appointed places and unconsciously follow the course of natural law, so is it a moral and spiritual universe. All is not well with the world, far from it; but all is right. The universe is founded on righteousness, and cannot be shaken. This is the truth. It is all we know on earth, and all we need to know.

## VII

### WOMEN

Although women are necessary to the welfare, progress and success of the Church, and although they are tireless workers in Church and Sunday School and tireless listeners to tiresome preachers, they seldom receive compliments from the pulpit. On the contrary: women are more often preached *at* than praised. Paul, who knew less about women than about anything else, was the first Christian minister to make the vain attempt of putting "woman in her place"; and many modern pastors, with no more knowledge, and considerably less ability, have embarked on the same fruitless and perilous enterprise. Women have been denounced from the pulpit for their hair, their hats, and their gowns; a subject on which the only man qualified to speak is not a clergyman, but a tailor.

It is high time that some preacher showed a little chivalry; and I, an amateur instead of a professional, will now do so. Women who read this sermon will find something to their advantage.

I like the retort made by a woman novelist to a critic. He: "Most women have no sense of hu-



mour.” She: “Well, what of it? Most men have no sense at all.” If this be true, it might be historically accounted for by the child’s version of what happened in the Garden of Eden. “God made Adam and he was very lonely, so God put him to sleep, took out his brains and made a woman.”

“Hope not for mind in woman,” said the poet Donne; but when he wrote that, he was not looking for mind.

In the last chapter of the Book of Proverbs, there is a sketch of the Ideal Woman, in the form of a “character.” This is one of the earliest specimens of the class of literature known as Character-books, preceding Overbury, Earle, and La Bruyère by about two thousand years.

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil.

She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.

She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.

She is like the merchants’ ships; she bringeth her food from afar.

She riseth also while it is yet night, and giveth meat to her household, and a portion to her maidens. . . .

She stretcheth out her hand to the poor; yea, she reacheth forth her hands to the needy.

She is not afraid of the snow for her household: for all her household are clothed with scarlet.

She maketh herself coverings of tapestry; her clothing is silk and purple.

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Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land. . . .

Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness.

She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.

Her children arise up, and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her.

This kind of woman is by no means obsolete; I know farmers' wives in the country, and mothers in the city, whom the quoted verses accurately describe.

Fashions change, manners change, the idea of beauty in anatomy, architecture, and in all the arts changes, but character does not change. Courage, courtesy, honesty, consideration for others have always been the characteristics of the ideal man; modesty, amiability, gentleness have always characterised the ideal woman.

Clever young women who think the surest way to popularity is through shock, would do well to remember that the essentials of character are the same in all times and places. I remember, in a once famous farce called *A Trip to Chinatown*, a dialogue between a pretty girl whose facial charm was exceeded only by her audacity, and an unscrupulous man of the world. She asked him several questions: "You find me beautiful? fascinating? brilliant? you like to be with me?" To all of which

enquiries she received an emphatic affirmative reply. Then she asked, "And you would like to marry me, wouldn't you?" "Not for gold or precious stones."

If an honest man is the noblest work of God, a good woman is the finest. In *The Ring and the Book*, the old Pope gives various illustrations showing the attainable altitude of humanity. What is the most godlike quality in the human race? Is it brains, courage, inventive power, knowledge? He finds it in the sheer loveliness of character displayed in an ignorant girl, Pompilia.

Everywhere

I see in the world the intellect of man,  
That sword, the energy his subtle spear,  
The knowledge which defends him like a shield,  
Everywhere; but they make not up, I think,  
The marvel of a soul like thine, earth's flower,  
She holds up to the softened gaze of God!

It is a rather curious fact that in the Old Testament the most famous women are villains, and in the New Testament the leading woman characters are saintly. I need only mention Jezebel and Delilah; Athaliah, more terrible than an army with banners; after these sinister persons, come Jael the murderer, and Deborah who glorified the cowardly deed; even the lovely and charming Ruth excelled chiefly in what is a second-rate virtue, obedience. But the New Testament women are immortal in their spiritual beauty. Mary the immaculate mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene, the reformed



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harlot; Martha and her sister Mary, the first representatives respectively of low and high church; the woman of Samaria who spread the news of the living water; the sick woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment; the poor widow who contributed all her fortune and her heart with it; the woman who was content with crumbs from the Master's table; the woman who publicly blessed Christ's mother; the women who followed Him to the cross, *stayed there*, and were the first to visit the tomb.

In addition to these, the work of Peter and of Paul could not have been successful without the support of woman. Women were just as necessary to the early church as they are now.

I do not understand why the fact that more women than men go to church should be regarded as counting against its value. The fact itself is more damaging to the men who stay away than it is to the church; but why should an assemblage of persons where women predominate connote intellectual inferiority? One minister complained to another that he could not get men to come to his services; and asked for his advice. The other said, "Why, last Sunday I preached to an enormous audience composed entirely of men." It was in the county jail.

The truth is that the proportionate worth of any undertaking is usually indicated by the excess of women over men who are interested in it. First-class music is surely not despicable; at orchestra



concerts the women vastly outnumber the men. Art exhibitions are not for silly and stupid people; there are ten women to one man who show their interest by attendance. On the other hand, at a prize-fight the men still outnumber the women; and at a cock-fight I am informed there are scarcely any women at all, and those few disguised in men's clothes; so that their presence and support will seem natural.

Foreign missions, city and country churches, municipal orchestras, public libraries, art museums, could not possibly exist without the constant and enthusiastic support of women. Musicians, preachers, poets, and painters, if they depended for their living on masculine aid, would starve.

It is often said that the interests of women are petty; that they read in the newspapers only the Social Column and the Fashion Page. Even if this is true, men's interests are hardly on a grander scale; for men will read with avidity five columns in fine print consisting of details connected with upper-cuts, left-hooks, and side-stepping.

It is just that women should support Christianity, for they owe their present independence more to Christianity than to anything else. Consider the position of women among Pagans, Mohammedans, American Indians, and heathen in general; and contrast that with their status in Christian countries. When Lafcadio Hearn lectured on English poetry to Japanese students at Tokio, he had considerable difficulty in explaining to them the conven-

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tional worshipful attitude maintained by English poets to women.

Women love religion, music, art, and poetry because they instinctively *know* that those things are immortal, whereas forms of government, politics, stock quotations, are ephemeral. Women do not have to be told that music and all forms of imperishable beauty are interesting; they *know* it. There is an instinct in women that leads them infallibly to choose and possess the best things in life.

If you wish to interest the average man in some enterprise, you must show him there is something in it making for his personal material advantage, or at all events for the practical welfare of the community; but the average woman will respond to an appeal based on beauty or nobility.

It used to be said by those opposed to granting political privileges to women, that in war they were anyhow inferior; for war was exclusively man's business. But since the days of Florence Nightingale—and even Lytton Strachey's adroit wit has not been able to darken her fame—we know that man has succeeded in making war the business of women. Women do go forth to the scene of battle; but instead of going out to destroy, they go out to heal and restore. The Red Cross, the Hospital Nurses, illustrate how women, by crucifying themselves, have saved men.

In *The Princess*, Tennyson, although old-fashioned and over conservative, was eternally right in

insisting on the natural fact that woman and man are different. "Woman is not the lesser man," but quite another thing. Thus the attempts of women to resemble men are as vain as they are silly. Why on earth should a woman want to be like a man? Yet Tennyson, in a few lines that should be read at every marriage-service, said that men and women must learn from each other.

Men should acquire sympathy and tenderness without losing virility; women should acquire understanding and the unprejudiced breadth of outlook that is born only of intelligence.

Women ought to cultivate their mental powers; much more than they do now. It is a true indictment against women that giving them the vote in national politics has produced no appreciable effect—which means that they have manifested no intellectual independence. There is no reason women should vote the same ticket as that voted by their husbands and fathers; let them think for themselves.

They have not, in the main, taken the privilege of the ballot seriously. They ought to qualify for citizenship by hard and faithful study of public questions. The League of Women Voters has done much; but there are more men today who can tell why they vote a certain ticket than there are women.

Amiability is an attractive virtue; but in matters of opinion, based on knowledge, women, especially American women, are, I think, too amiable for their intellectual welfare. If some one asks you if you



have read a certain book, why lie about it and say you have? Why apologise? There is no occasion for either falsehood or shame.

In short, what women need is more intellectual independence, and the courage that comes from it. Many sons love their mothers, and regard their opinions as of no importance. "Mother doesn't know anything about it." I like to see a family where the boys not only love and caress their mother, but where her mind and knowledge are sufficiently good to command the respect of her offspring.

In his gossipy poem, *Old Pictures in Florence*, Browning makes a comparison between the perfection of Greek art and the imperfection of the human mind. He says that because Greek art is perfect, it reached its goal; it was finished; it therefore cannot develop. The human mind is faulty and clumsy, but it is *alive*: it has within its imperfections the principle of eternal development. Therefore when we look at perfect Greek statues, we should not repine because our bodies are so far short of the ideal human frame; we should rejoice, because with all our imperfections, nay because of our imperfections, our minds have something finer than any form of perfection—the principle of development.

Too many women are worried or despondent about minor matters, while they regard serious de-



fects with complacency. It is of course important that they should look as well as possible, and dress as becomingly as their means will allow; but these are not the most serious considerations. Many women (and men) are keenly concerned about their looks and their clothes; am I looking my best to-night? are my clothes right? When really they should ask themselves, have I got any brains? and if not, how shall I supply this deficiency?

Every one, says Browning, looks at a perfect statue, and soliloquises, "Ah, I wish I looked like that!" a vain and impossible wish. It is difficult, by taking thought, that is, by worrying about it, to add a cubit to one's stature or to change the curve of one's nose, or to acquire sudden wealth; but every one can improve in mind and character.

The Pope said of Pompilia that she was just as truly an angel living on earth, dressed in her street-clothes, as she was in heaven, clad in radiant garments. Innocence in love, beauty of aspiration, cleanliness in heart, often increase facial beauty. Byron, who had had sufficient experience of light women, reserved his highest tribute for carefree innocence and noble impulses.

She walks in beauty, like the night  
Of cloudless climes and starry skies,  
And all that's best of dark and bright  
Meets in her aspect and her eyes,  
Thus mellow'd to that tender light  
Which heaven to gaudy day denies.

One shade the more, one ray the less  
 Had half impair'd the nameless grace  
 Which waves in every raven tress  
 Or softly lightens o'er her face,  
 Where thoughts serenely sweet express  
 How pure, how dear their dwelling-place.

And on that cheek and o'er that brow  
 So soft, so calm, yet eloquent,  
 The smiles that win, the tints that glow  
 But tell of days in goodness spent,—  
 A mind at peace with all below,  
 A heart whose love is innocent.

Byron's great contemporary, Wordsworth, showed in one of his finest tributes to women that their attractiveness did not depend on romantic illusion; that with the right sort of wife and mother, daily intimacy did not lessen personal charm.

I hope that Hawthorne did not intend his character Hilda, in *The Marble Faun*, to be the ideal woman; for toward Hilda I cannot repress a feeling of aversion. "Her soul was like a star and dwelt apart"; but from the selfish sanctity of its seclusion, no real good resulted; no one was aided or comforted or inspired in the struggle of life. She was no help to sinners; she was their despair. She had the purity of an angel, but not the purity of a good woman. She was like one who should refuse to help a drowning man, for fear of soiling her clothes.

But Wordsworth showed that a good woman

need not lose her ideality or her romantic, mysterious attraction, even in the daily household duties. She could be practical, sagacious, efficient; and yet have the fascination of a nymph in the moonlight.

She was a phantom of delight  
When first she gleam'd upon my sight;  
A lovely apparition, sent  
To be a moment's ornament;  
Her eyes as stars of twilight fair;  
Like Twilight's, too, her dusky hair;  
But all things else about her drawn  
From May-time and the cheerful dawn;  
A dancing shape, an image gay,  
To haunt, to startle, and waylay.

I saw her upon nearer view,  
A spirit, yet a woman too!  
Her household motions light and free,  
And steps of virgin-liberty;  
A countenance in which did meet  
Sweet records, promises as sweet;  
A creature not too bright or good  
For human nature's daily food,  
For transient sorrows, simple wiles,  
Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.

And now I see with eye serene  
The very pulse of the machine;  
A being breathing thoughtful breath,  
A traveller between life and death;  
The reason firm, the temperate will,  
Endurance, foresight, strength, and skill;

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A perfect woman, nobly plann'd  
To warn, to comfort, and command;  
And yet a Spirit still, and bright  
With something of an angel-light.

There is no doubt that the average man has more physical strength than the average woman; it does not occur to any sensible woman to be ashamed of this inferiority. Well, history seems to show that in matters of initiative, in creative and administrative powers, the average man is again superior to the average woman. I cannot see why any woman should resent this any more than she resents her lack of physical strength.

For in the love of beauty, in ideality, in refinement, in purity, in accuracy of *feeling*, women are as superior to men as they are inferior in brute force. The best way to observe this is to consider children.

The instincts of the average healthy boy are mainly bad. Robbers and murderers are his heroes. In primary schools—not in colleges—the toughest boy is the idol of the others. I remember when I was six years old, there was in our room at school an absolute young villain, who would have destroyed the world, had he possessed sufficient power. He was vulgar, foul, pugnacious, cruel, and a bully; he was our hero. (He is now, I believe, in prison.) One day I was behaving badly, and some one said to me, "Why, if you go on in this way, you will be



like Blank!" My eyes glowed with delight. He was my ideal!

The only way boys—who are savages at heart—become decent citizens and fit to live with—is through discipline, corporal punishment, public opinion, and the grace of God.

Little girls—very little—while they are not angelic, and may betray meanness and pettiness, surpass boys in one important respect; their *ideals* are good. They do not want to grow up and become adventuresses and scoundrels, they want to do good, help the sick and needy, stimulate the best impulses of men.

So many women have longed to be of use to men, have considered it their highest happiness to influence men in right directions, that the careers of many successful men have been accompanied by the sacrifice of women who could not bear to "stand in their way." I once saw a double-page picture in *Life*. It represented a vast space of deep water; a woman was drowning; all that was visible of her sinking body was her two hands above the surface; a few yards distant, a strong man was rapidly swimming *away from her*; and under the picture was the one word *Success*.

Many of our modern novelists love to expend their talents for ridicule and satire on evangelical churches, and especially on the organisations of women who do most of the work; the Ladies' Aid Society, the Foreign Mission Band, the Sewing Cir-

cle, and so on. Now three months of the year, I am associated with a small country church in a mid-western state. I happen to know the real value of the work done by women, and their sacrifices. In addition to the housework, they have to wash and dress the children, and from afar bring them to church and Sunday School; they do all this because they know the value of religion in daily life; they are not going to have their children brought up in ignorance and savagery.

I hope that in heaven God reserves an especially comfortable chair for the oldest daughter in a large family. This girl has no youth; from her earliest recollection she has always had to "mind the baby." She has to clean up after the younger ones, doing all the drudgery of a mother with none of the maternal passion that glorifies it.

Women not only have more passive courage than men, such as waiting in solitary anxiety, with none of the relief that action brings. They often have more of the desperate, reckless courage, that goes with the love of adventure. Marriage is an enterprise filled with more peril for a woman than for a man; a woman leaves the security of her home, and takes a chance with a stranger. No children would ever be born if men had to bear them; no man could stand the months of inactivity and sickness, with horrible agony and mortal danger as the climax. And if everything then turns out successfully, for three years the mother must know

every instant in the twenty-four hours of every day, exactly where that child is. Are we men really worth all that agony and fatigue and boredom?

Well, there are some men who appreciate their mothers and their wives. They appreciate their mothers after the mothers are dead; and they appreciate their wives when they, the men, are sick.

The position of women as home-makers is also appreciated by some bachelors. The great Russian novelist, Turgenev, whom George Moore called the greatest artist since antiquity, said, "I would give up all my fame and all my art if there were one woman who cared whether or not I came home late to dinner."

The *Stabat Mater* applies not only to the mother of Jesus at the cross, it applies to millions of women who have "stood by" their husbands and their sons. The capacity of women to "stand by" can never be overestimated; that is why it is such an irreparable disaster for a man to lose his mother. A boy may be common-place, even stupid, the butt of his school-fellows; but there is a woman at home in whose eyes he is a romantic hero; one who idealises him; one to whom he will never turn in vain.

An old hymn expresses the universality of Mary's devotion.

Jews were wrought to cruel madness,  
Christians fled in fear and sadness,  
Mary stood the cross beside:

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At its foot her feet she planted,  
By the dreadful scene undaunted,  
Till the gentle sufferer died.

Poets oft have told her story,  
Painters decked her brow with glory,  
Priests her name have deified:  
But no worship, song, or glory,  
Touches like the simple story,  
Mary stood the cross beside.

So when crushed by fierce oppression,  
Goodness suffers like transgression,  
Christ again is crucified:  
But if love be there truehearted,  
By no grief or terror parted,  
We may stand the cross beside.



## VIII

### INTERLUDE

I know that every reader of this book is a philosopher and a theologian, because every intelligent man and woman in the world formulates, at least mentally, some conjecture concerning the origin of the universe and of human life, and some belief about the Supreme Being. *Whence am I? Why am I? Whither am I going?* are three questions asked in thought nearly every day even by those whose time seems taken up with mundane affairs.

I am only an amateur preacher. These sermons are not delivered from the pulpit and have no clerical authority; they are more like conversations around the church door after the service is over, where the talker and his listeners stand on the same level.

I make no apology today for taking you with me into that uncharted country called Philosophy. I cannot bring you through upon whatever land may be beyond, for even the greatest philosophers have been compelled to wait for that result until they have departed from this world. But at all events I can bring us safely back to the ground where we now stand; and remember that the chief value of

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philosophical discussions and inquiries lies in their power to challenge thought, and to arouse intellectual activity—the chief advantage man has over beasts, and perhaps his highest and most enduring happiness.

Of all studies, philosophy is at once the most fascinating and the most irritating. It is the most fascinating, because it opens new and wide vistas to the imagination, because it makes the natural and visible world more mysterious and interesting, and because one man's guess is as good as another's; no one can prove another is wrong. But to practical minds—like Benjamin Franklin's, for example, philosophy is both irritating and futile, because no one can make definite progress or reach any goal.

Let me illustrate it in this way. Suppose you start to study French with a teacher. The teacher knows more than you do; and you feel certain that if you study continuously and faithfully, you will eventually become less ignorant. But in philosophy the professor *knows* no more than you, so far as ultimate truth is concerned; you can study ten years, without drawing any nearer to the goal. In ability to answer definitely the greatest questions, the professor of philosophy *knows* no more than the man in the street, no more than a dog. He is acquainted with the history of speculative thought; he knows what former philosophers—now dead—have believed; but he can himself give you no verifiable knowledge on ultimate truths.

Personally I am grateful for the years I spent on philosophy and metaphysics; my eyes and mind were opened, my imagination enriched, and the world has been far more interesting than if I had not read Plato, Berkeley, Kant, Schopenhauer, Lotze.

*God* is one of the most familiar words in every language; one sees it in nearly every book, in many songs; one hears it every day, with an emphasis varying from extreme reverence to the most careless profanity. Yet no one has ever been able completely to define it, and no two men have precisely the same conception of it. *No man hath seen God at any time*, said the Apostle John.

Although during the last four or five thousand years, there has been an enormous increase in the population of human beings, there has been a corresponding decrease in the population of gods. In the palmy days of Greece, and later, during the domination of the Roman Empire, there were very many gods, and of an almost infinite variety. In certain places Polytheism is still flourishing; but the advance of what we call modern civilisation has been fatal to the once lively communities of divine beings. From a vast number they have shrunk to one, and there are some men and women who say there is none at all.

In making any attempt, however inarticulate, to establish one's own religious belief, or to explain the material world, one's conception of God is of primary importance; for that conception not only de-



termines one's mental activity, but may and ought to govern and direct one's daily life in the world of action. Nothing more clearly reveals a man's character than his conception of God. One man's God is a tribal deity, who will take vengeance on the man's enemies; another man's God is a redeeming and all-merciful Saviour.

However deeply tinged with pessimism, the old Greek world was assuredly picturesque and romantic. The sun was a god, the moon another; the sea another; every tree and every river was a god. Thus a country walk, especially at twilight, must have abounded in spiritual companions. I have no doubt that many pedestrians distinctly saw gods lurking near trees, pools, and rivers.

The normal Christian child regards God as a big man, perhaps the only person who can whip his father. I supposed that God was a large masculine creature, with a copious white beard, and a sonorous bass voice. I often looked for him, and of course always in one direction; for was not his home in the sky? I remember very well one evening, just after sunset, when I was looking for him with particular ardour, I suddenly saw him. There was a little stretch of paling blue between two fluffy clouds: *and there he was!*

Many philosophers ridicule the so-called anthropomorphic conception of God; that is, the belief that God is a super-man. Of course he may be as unlike a man as a lead-pencil is unlike an elephant.



Yet I do not believe it is possible for any of us, no matter how intellectually mature, to think of God without thinking of Him to some extent in terms of humanity. Practically, that is with a view to moral action, such a conception, however faulty and inadequate, may be of service.

Suppose my watch, which is now ticking, should suddenly become self-conscious, and begin to think. Suppose it should ask itself the question, Who made me? It would probably believe that some cathedral clock made it. That would be grotesquely erroneous; and yet, if the watch prayed, and said, "O great and mighty Clock, may I always keep good time and never go out of order," it is conceivable that such a petition might be helpful.

Suppose a Ford car should become self-conscious, and ask, Who made me? It would probably believe that it had been made by a Pierce-Arrow or a Rolls Royce. Such a belief would be very far from the truth. But if the Ford car continued to be self-conscious—many of them seem so—and prayed, "O mighty Pierce-Arrow, may I never get a puncture, may I never require cranking," such aspiration might show beneficial results.

Although there can hardly be a finer conception of God than that set forth in the Gospels, human theology, in attempting to build a vast superstructure on that solid foundation, has made many blunders. There is no doubt that most Christian people today have a nobler conception of God than was

common in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. Many people then thought of God as a being apart from his world, who gave the universe an initial shove some few thousand years ago, and never touched it since. One does not have to be a pantheist—that is to identify the world with God—to believe that God must be in His world today. In other words, it is reasonable to believe that all life is dependent on its Source. Let me give a homely illustration of what I mean.

When a child goes into a factory and sees a man standing in front of every machine, he naturally believes that the man runs or stops the machine at will, that each machine contains its own source of power. But we know that every machine in the factory is dependent on the central power, coming from the power-house, and that if anything happened to the central motive power, every machine in the building would stop. Thus philosophers are practically unanimous in believing that trees and flowers have no separate existence, but that all life is dependent and springs from some central power. What is this central power? Philosophers call it the *Thing-in-itself*, to distinguish it from its manifestations, which we clearly see. No one can prove *what* the Thing-in-itself is, but most intelligent people believe *that* it is. Our attitude toward life and death is determined by our attitude toward the Thing-in-itself.

Well, if all living things in the earth come from

some central power, some Thing-in-itself, what is the nature of this Thing, this motor, this engine? Some say Matter: they are the materialists.

Herbert Spencer said the Thing-in-itself is "an infinite and eternal Energy, from which all things proceed." Late in life he consented to spell the word Energy with a capital, a large concession for Herbert Spencer. I remember when he first did this, and an editorial in the *Hartford Courant* made the following comment thereupon. "Yet many Christian people will regard Energy, even when spelled with a capital E, as a poor substitute for their Father in Heaven."

Jesus Christ said that the Thing-in-itself is *Love*: Intelligent, all-powerful Love. This is the doctrine elaborated by the Apostle John, and set forth in the nineteenth century by the philosopher Lotze, who called the Thing-in-itself "Living Love." It was also the firm belief of two leaders of Victorian poetry, Tennyson and Browning. Hence, when Tennyson wrote

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,

he spelled Love with a capital, to indicate that Love is the Thing-in-itself.

If you believe that Love is the motor of the Universe, you are in harmony with Christianity, and (ultimately) an optimist; if you believe that Blind Will controls and drives the universe, you are quite logically and naturally a pessimist.



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It is interesting to observe that the God revealed in the New Testament in many respects resembles the God proclaimed by the latest researches in modern science; and that the conception of God as an image removed from man seemed just as silly to the prophet Isaiah as it does today. There are two passages in the Bible which I like to read in sequence, because they show respectively unintelligent and intelligent conceptions of God. I refer to the 44th chapter of Isaiah and the 17th chapter of Acts. There is terrific irony in the old prophet's attack on the childishness of Paganism.

### Isaiah

Who hath formed a god, or molten a graven image that is profitable for nothing?

The carpenter stretcheth out his rule; he marketh it out with a line; he fitteth it with planes, and he marketh it out with the compass, and maketh it after the figure of a man, according to the beauty of a man; that it may remain in the house.

He heweth him down cedars, and taketh the cypress and the oak, which he strengtheneth for himself, among the trees of the forest: he planteth an ash, and the rain doth nourish it.

Then shall it be for a man to burn: for he will take thereof, and warm himself; yea, he kindleth it, and baketh bread; yea, he maketh a god, and worshippeth it; he maketh it a graven image, and falleth down thereto.

He burneth part thereof in the fire; with part thereof he eateth flesh; he roasteth roast, and is satisfied; yea, he warmeth himself, and saith, Aha, I am warm, I have seen the fire;

And the residue thereof he maketh a god, even his graven image: he falleth down unto it, and worshippeth it, and prayeth unto it, and saith, Deliver me; for thou art my god.



## Paul's address in Athens

God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things . . .

That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us;

For in him we live, and move, and have our being.

No modern conception of God is more reasonable, more scientific, or more dignified than this. The infinite and eternal Energy, from which all things proceed; or as Tennyson phrases it in his poem *The Higher Pantheism*,

*Closer is He than breathing, and nearer than hands and feet.*

Can you define Faith? A good definition is given in the eleventh chapter of Hebrews: Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

Many say that Faith is the opposite of Reason. This is to talk nonsense. True faith is not only never opposed to reason, it is *based* on reason. The antithesis should never be Faith and Reason, but Faith and *Knowledge*.

I have heard many say, "I believe in God and Christ, but not with my reason." One might as well say, "I walk, but not with my legs." If you attempt

to prove to me that you believe without your reason, you are using your reason to convince me that you are not using it. This is both silly and dangerous; for whenever any thinking man opposes his faith and his reason, his reason will ultimately win, as it ought to. I am not familiar with Catholic theology; but I am sure that the true Catholic believes in his religion because he believes that it is more reasonable to accept the teachings of the Church than to accept the contrary.

When I was a small boy in Hartford, I went one Sunday night to hear a famous and eloquent Baptist preacher. He declared that Christian faith was flatly opposed to reason, and that was why he believed it. All Christian ideas about God, said he, are contrary to reason; all the greater, therefore, is the triumph of faith, because you make your Christian faith conquer your reason. Young as I was, I knew he was talking nonsense.

His subsequent career is interesting and not uninteresting. Although he was devout and sincere on the night when I heard him, in a few years he resigned from the Christian ministry, then he became an agnostic, and wrote against religion; then he became an atheist; then he became an anarchist; and the last I heard of him was that he had joined a corrupt political organisation.

Emotion and passion enter into our faith in God, as into our love of country; but in the last analysis, if you believe in the Christian religion—as I do with

my whole heart and soul and strength—you believe in it because it is a more reasonable explanation of the universe and of the person and career of Jesus than any other that has been suggested.

How about our faith in immortality? Of course the desire for the future life does not prove that such a thing exists. Jesus was certain of it, and taught it as a fundamental idea in Christianity. I have faith in the future life, for two reasons: because the greatest and wisest Person in history believed in it and taught it, and because the whole universe so far as we can understand it, would be a meaningless farce without the future life. It is not merely that I myself want to live after death, though I certainly do: it is that this wonderful world on any other supposition becomes to me a nonsensical jumble.

But while my faith in God and in the future life is based on reason, it is still a matter of Faith and not of Knowledge. I cannot prove to unbelievers that there is a God of Love, and I cannot prove that I shall live after death. Knowledge is something that can be demonstrated and proved to the satisfaction of every reasonable man. It can be verified. I know that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. But I cannot prove that there is a future life any more than I can prove that I shall live until the setting of today's sun: but I believe I shall.

How about the doctrine of free will? Tennyson wrote

Our wills are ours, we know not how:  
Our wills are ours, to make them thine.

There would not be room in the Congressional Library for all the books written on the hotly-contested doctrine of free will. Yet Tennyson has said all we really know about it in two lines.

President Hadley once remarked, "Theoretically I do not believe in the doctrine of free will: but practically I do." He meant, I suppose, that when you speculate about it, it seems as if the human will could not be free; but in everyday life, we act on the supposition that it is free. Personally I believe, that although human character is to a certain extent influenced by heredity and environment, the human will is free. Man has choice. When Julius Cæsar was asked why he would not come to the Senate-house, he said

The cause is in my will: I will not come.

Is the will free? Let me take two trivial illustrations. I have a piece of paper in front of me. Shall I now drop it in the waste-basket or not? I do: but no fatalist can ever convince me that I might not have held on to it. I feel certain that I could have done and still can do what I please with that piece of paper.



I think it wise, before rejecting any idea, to consider the consequences of rejecting it. For no mind can remain in passive objection. If you say you do not believe in God, you cannot stop there; you must attempt to explain the world without God. Hence I believe in the freedom of the will because it seems to me unreasonable to believe the contrary. Our judgments of history and of individuals, our entire framework of jurisprudence, our sensations of remorse, regret, and shame, are based on the idea that the will is free. Leave fatalism to pessimists and pagans; the Christian should rejoice (reasonably) in freedom. You have no right to condemn one man and praise another; you have no right to call one brave and another cowardly; you are ridiculous if you feel remorse or shame for any action: *unless* you believe that other men and yourself could have done differently, that is, unless you believe in the freedom of the will. There can be no heroism and no disgrace, there can be no virtue and no vice, unless one believes in the freedom of the will.

Here is a simple creed: I believe in the Son of God as a revelation of Love: I believe in the future life: I believe in the freedom of the will.

But I am not a clairvoyant; I cannot prove these things. I have faith in them, faith founded on reason.

Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

Few statements are more absurd or dangerous than the frequently heard remark, "It does not make any difference what you believe, so long as you believe it." You might just as well say that there is no difference between truth and falsehood. It makes all the difference in the world what you believe, because belief is the spring of action. If you earnestly believe that you are on the right road when you are not, every step you take leads you farther and farther away from where you ought to be. The faster and more confidently you walk, the worse off you are. If a religion is false, the most severely orthodox are the furthest from the truth. The history of religion is full of bad examples of religious sincerity; examples that caused untold misery, suffering, and slaughter.

Thus many who have a superficial knowledge of comparative religions will often say, "One religion is as good as another." It simply is not so; the facts are otherwise. Emancipation from one form of religion is sometimes the first requisite step toward a fruitful religious life.

Let me complete the quotation from the Apostle John. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, he who is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared Him."

In other words, the clearest revelation that has ever come to humanity from a divine source, is in the appearance of Jesus Christ. Not so much in what he said, as in what he was and is.

And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father), full of grace and truth.

I ardently believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ; precisely what his relation to the Father was, I cannot tell. But I behold His glory, and I feel sure that the glory indicates the Divine source whence it came. The sun sets, we see that luminary no more, darkness comes on apace. Then the moon rises, and two things immediately become evident, the second of which is more reassuring than the first. The moonlight drives away the darkness and quenches many lesser lights of the stars: but the true glory of the moon is that it says, "The sun is shining." All its splendour, all its glory, all the radiance of its face, come from the light of the sun; although we cannot see the sun, the sight of the moon in the darkness is the evidence that the sun has lost none of its brilliance.

So in this dark world, where no man has ever seen God, and where even the highest conceptions of Him must be inadequate, the appearance of Jesus is the best evidence not only of God's existence, but of His love.

## IX

### TRIANGLE

In the deepening dusk of a January evening at the city of Rome, in the year 1698, a young wife and mother, only seventeen years old, Pompilia by name, was talking with her foster-parents, Pietro and Violante. Suddenly there was a knock at the door. Pompilia's middle-aged husband, Count Guido Franceschini, accompanied by four hired assassins, rushed into the room, and murdered the girl and the old pair. Not many miles from the scene, the escaping criminals were caught by the police. They were brought to trial, and the verdict was Guilty. The Count appealed to the Pope, Innocent XII, who reaffirmed the judgment of the court, and on 22 February 1698, in the Piazza del Popolo at Rome, the Count was beheaded and his four companions hanged. Such are the facts out of which Robert Browning constructed an epic called *The Ring and the Book*.

Browning represents the aged Pope in solitary meditation. Just as he has made up his mind to have the five criminals executed, he asks himself, on what do I base my judgment of their guilt, and indeed my judgment of right and wrong? How



could I call one man good and another evil, if I did not have a religion or a philosophy that establishes standards, distinguishing between good and evil? He then proceeds into an examination of his belief in the Christian religion—and it is at this point that the discussion turns from a particular sordid murder into a question of universal significance.

Taking the poem as a starting-point, I now propose to look into the foundations of Christian faith, and to consider some arguments for and against it. I have never been, and am not now, afraid of the truth. Why should I fear something that I have spent my life trying to find?

Suppose you saw a man with a yardstick, and in response to your question, he announced that he was going to measure the distance between New York and Liverpool. You might laugh. Suppose he should tell you that this yardstick was not bought at a ten cent store, but from a physics-laboratory, and that it was correct to a thousandth of an inch. Even so, he could not measure the Atlantic Ocean with a yardstick. Likewise it is impossible for our finite minds—no matter how accurate they may be in small things—to measure infinity. Well, then, are we to quit before we have started? By no means.

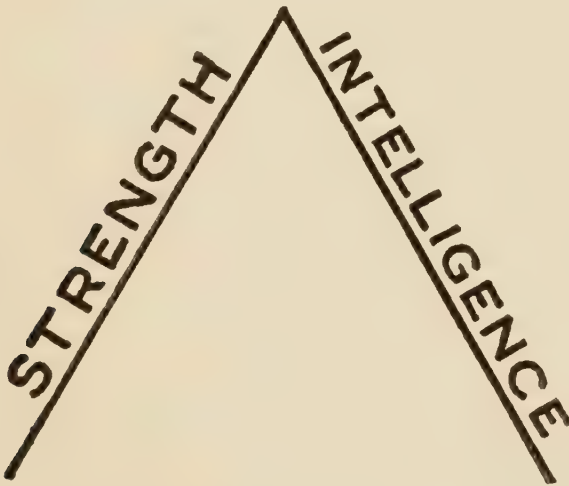
The sun is more than ninety million miles distant from the earth. Yet by so little and simple a thing as a watch-crystal, you can draw fire from that im-

mense distance and set the grass aflame. So, small as our minds are, we can draw enough light and heat from the Sun of Righteousness to illumine and inspire our whole existence. Many Christian saints and heroes have done this; they have not only warmed their own souls, they have started spiritual conflagrations that the world has not been able to extinguish.

The chief aim of thinking man is to reach God. By contemplation of the material works of nature and of the human mind, we can obtain a two-fold conception of God, we can find two sides of the triangle. It seems unreasonable to suppose a universe so wonderful could have been planned by something less wonderful than itself; that the stream should rise above its source. But wonderful as Matter is, Mind is far more wonderful. There are no two things in the universe more different than mind and matter. The brain is a damp sponge inside the skull—is it mind, or the tool of mind? The psychologists are endeavouring to discover the particular parts of the brain used for particular thoughts or emotions. Suppose some day they should discover this—suppose they should succeed in localising brain functions. Then, to put it crudely, we should know (say) what whenever we tried to remember a name or date, there would be a disturbance in the back of the brain; if we were suddenly angry, the disturbance would be in the left side; if we were sorry for something, in the right side; if

a man told a woman he loved her, the front of the brain would be active. If all these things were true (a large order), even then, the difference between memory, anger, remorse, and love on the one hand, and the damp sponge on the other, would be greater than that between the east and the west.

Taking then as our two long steps upward toward God, the material universe and the human mind, and judging God exactly as we judge an architect—by the quality of his work, we may ascribe two characteristics to the Divine Being—Infinite Strength and Infinite Intelligence. In other words, we have got two of the three necessary attributes for the God of the Christian religion, two sides of the necessary triangle.



But while a Being possessed of infinite strength and infinite intelligence might be sublime, an object of admiration or fear, it is not yet an object of *worship*. The base of the triangle is missing. What



is the necessary quality in a being worthy of worship and devotion? It is Goodness.

Well, cannot we obtain sufficient evidence of God's goodness by studying geology and history, by reading the newspapers and using our eyes and ears? No.

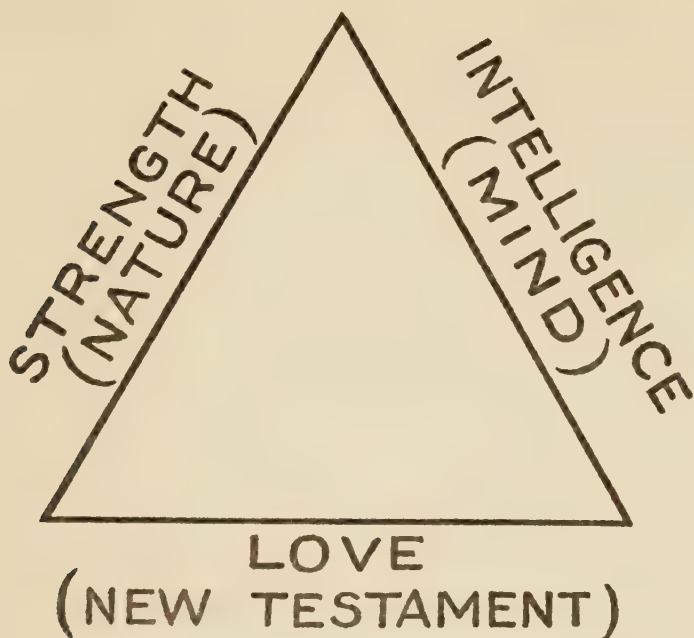
There are many things in natural and human history that indicate goodness in the creator, but there are fully as many that indicate the contrary. Science reveals the strength and intelligence of God, but tells us nothing of his good will.

I can admire something that is stronger and wiser than I, but I refuse worship unless it is better than I. I will not vote for God unless He is a being whose love, charity, tenderness, and mercy are in excess of my own. And as I contemplate the mighty works of nature and the subtlety of the mind of man, I find insufficient evidence of the love of God. Nobody, however powerful and clever, can get my vote unless I myself give it. He may destroy me because he is bigger—but I won't vote for him. Not even an Infinite Being can change my will, unless I myself change it. Human beings, contemptible as they are, have yet the power of choice.

It is not in nature, it is not in scientific textbooks, it is not in architecture, it is not even in music that I obtain evidence of the love of God. There is only one place where I receive the revelation that the goodness of God is equal to his strength and intelligence—that is in the Four Gospels, which tell us



the story of Jesus Christ. Now is the triangle complete, for its base is Love.



What is the real reason for the appearance of Christ on earth? To teach us morality? No; the wisest men have always taught virtue. The heart of the Gospel is not in the ten commandments, or in a list of duties. *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* The significance of the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus is that he is the unique revelation of the love of God.

We acquire the threefold conception of God through nature, the human mind and the story of Jesus. This story, as told in the Gospels with matchless literary art, is as clear as air and simple enough for the understanding of a child. If it were not for the story of Christ, I should never go to

church, I should never worship, I should never pray. So far from the incarnation being negligible in religion, it is for me the only true religion. He is the only voice from heaven that seems to me authentic, He is the only light that pierces the darkness.

Suppose we could obtain a sufficiently clear notion of the goodness of God through nature and history—then the New Testament would immediately become superfluous. The Gospel would not only be no good news, it would not even be news. What is the use of solemnly telling me something I already know? I heard a Catholic priest say on Easter Day that if Jesus were not divine, the Catholic Church would be the greatest enigma in history. So it would; so would any church. It would be much ado about nothing.

It is important to remember that whether you believe in Christ or not, the story of his appearance is not superfluous. No news was ever needed more than that. It supplies precisely and fully information nowhere else discoverable—information essential to the peace, hope, and happiness of mankind. It makes every individual human life significant and precious.

What is the best argument against the truth of the Christian religion?

Unbelievers may be divided into two classes, the materialists and the sceptics; neither of them have ever injured Christianity.

Here is a foolish question, which I often hear. How can you believe in the Christian religion, when so many men, who are certainly as clever as you are, do not believe in it? You might just as well ask a citizen, How can you vote the Democratic ticket, when so many men, equally wise and patriotic, vote Republican? Faith is a matter of individual choice, which one must be ready rationally to defend, but which opposition does not destroy.

Browning compares faith to a pearl. I take my pearl, and show it proudly to some one who says, "Yes, but you can't eat pearls. I prefer potatoes." There have always been people who prefer potatoes to pearls. Esau was the father of all materialists, because the poor fellow was so hungry. The streets are filled with men who say, "I am going this way only once, and I shall be a long time dead. I mean to enjoy life while it lasts." These men are often called shrewd, clever, hard-headed. Show them something materially good, like a dinner or a raise in salary, and they are acutely interested. Talk to them about music, art, religion—you might as well talk to a piece of cheese. It is not surprising that they do not believe in the Christian religion; the surprising thing is that a great shock or a terrible anguish or the loss of some one they love, may bring them into belief. Then they see that material things are of no support. The fact that the world is full of worldly-minded people is no argument against religion. It is what ought to be expected.

But there is another and a nobler class of unbelievers. These do not prefer potatoes to pearls—they do not believe that what you have found *is* a pearl. You bring them your pearl; they laugh pityingly and say, “Why, my friend, that isn’t a pearl at all. It is pretty, but it isn’t genuine.” While granting the beauty of the Gospel story, they do not believe it is true. There have always been people like that, many of them with wise and prudent minds. In every one of the twenty centuries of Christianity, there have been a considerable number of cultivated individuals who have done their best to destroy it. They have used all their intellectual powers, all their scientific education, all their will and energy, to kill Christian faith. Really it is amusing to think how little they have accomplished. After twenty centuries Christianity is stronger than ever. The harder they hit it, the more robust it becomes.

The materialists and the sceptics have inflicted no serious injury on Christianity. My opinion is that they have helped it. Enemies strengthen a good cause.

But there is one argument against Christianity, there is one class of people, that must be reckoned with. They have hurt the Christian Church in the past, they are hurting it now.

They are those who insist they have found the pearl, that it is genuine, that it is to be prized above everything else in the world—and then they show by



their actions that they prefer potatoes. These are not frank and honest enemies, these are traitors.

Although Christian faith cannot be proved like geometry, it can in one aspect be tested. Christianity is a plan of action, a way of life, in which supreme emphasis is laid on certain things. Christianity definitely promises to accomplish certain benefits for those who accept it. If you do what I say, said our Lord, you will be better, you will be more charitable, you will be happier. Now if we see professed Christians, prominent church-members whose lives how no difference from the lives of those who have no religion, this is not merely a ridiculous spectacle. It is terrible, it is frightful, it is tragic. Why?

Who is the most formidable enemy of a physician? Is it another doctor who happens to be a competitor? No. It is a patient who goes around saying, "I took the medicine that doctor gave me, and it made me worse." For, in this individual instance, that doctor has been proved a failure. If the majority of his patients were of the same opinion, the doctor would have to leave town.

Now if Christianity professes to be able to make men and women better, every church-member who is not made better is a serious argument against the truth of Christianity. All professed Christians who exhibit in their lives selfishness, cheating, hardness of heart, meanness, jealousy, envy, hatred, are terrible indictments against the Christian religion. They

are doing their utmost to destroy it. Every one of them might as well walk the streets with a placard on breast and back, proclaiming in large letters

### CHRISTIANITY IS A FAILURE

For in their instances, it is a failure—a proved failure.

If I thought that Christians were no better than non-Christians, I should suffer from depression. But it is not so. Taking Christians as a class, they are so much better than unbelievers, that on those rare occasions when a church-member is caught in crime, it makes front-page news.

In a certain sense, we are all hypocrites. No man or woman can live up to the Christian ideals. If we could, they would not be ideals. But most church-members are on the level. They mean well; most of them are happier and better than they would be without faith. But every professed Christian should remember, whenever he indulges in meanness, selfishness, jealousy, and other sins, he is striking a terrible blow at his religion—he is an efficient argument against it.

Consider the opposite side of the question. If all church-members in the world began now to live according to their faith, they would not only improve, they would revolutionise human society. Such is the power of the Christian religion, whenever its force is applied.

After the old Pope in Browning's poem has examined his belief to its foundations, he speaks nine words that no Feeble-faith should ever forget.

*I must outlive a thing ere know it dead.*

How do I know whether a thing is dead? I know it dead only if I have outlived it. I go into the woods with dog and gun. A partridge rises; I shoot; he falls. I take him home, I have him cooked, I eat him. He is dead. I am a poor miserable human creature who may tomorrow be killed in the street by a motorcar; but anyhow, I have lived longer than that partridge. Every year someone says that Christianity is dead. Is it? In the eighteenth century, many writers said it was dead, and one of them thought he had killed it.

When I was a student at Yale, we read the work of a German philosopher—*Philosophy of the Unconscious* by Eduard von Hartmann. On the second page of his interesting book, he said, "Christianity is already dead, having passed through all its phases." About twenty years ago, I tried to find out, just for curiosity's sake, whether or not *Hartmann* was dead. Of course the man in the street knew nothing about it; I asked three or four professors of philosophy. Every one of them made the same answer. "Well now, I don't know whether Hartmann is dead or not." How my readers feel about this matter I cannot say; but for my part, I had rather be dead than not have any one know



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whether or not I was dead. I can conceive of no more complete oblivion than that. Hartmann said in 1869 that Christianity was dead; in 1905 the experts in his own subject could not remember whether he was dead or alive.

Is Christianity dead? It has serious faults in its organisations, but you cannot travel anywhere without seeing churches. No, it is not dead. The probability is that every one of its living foes will die before Christianity is extinct.

In a certain town in Europe about fifteen years ago, a university professor declared in a lecture that Jesus was a myth. On the following Sunday thirty thousand people assembled in a square in that town, and they sang together *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God!* Christianity is not dead; not yet.

Well, then, is anything wrong with the church? Shall we be complacent, self-satisfied?

Oh, there are many things wrong with the church, there are many things wrong with every one of us. What in particular is the matter with the church? What does it need? It needs purification. It needs a tonic. The camp-followers have come to the front.

In the early days of Christianity, there were not many Christians, but every one of them was one hundred percent. There were no hypocrites. Why? Because it was dangerous to be a Christian. If a man said, *I am a Christian*, he was crucified, or burned or tortured in some equally horrible manner.



Did the killing of Christians kill Christianity? Quite otherwise. When one Christian died, two grew in his place. They clamoured for punishment, they competed for the prize of torture. One man shouted, "Don't forget me—I'm a Christian too!" But before they could get the fire started under him, others, men, women, and children, singing, laughing, cheering, also wished to be counted. "Don't overlook us! we are all Christians!"

In those times if one said he was a Christian, his neighbours handed him over to the police. But today if any one said he was a Christian, his neighbours would say, What of it? It used to mean something, something definite, to be a Christian. It drew the attention of the authorities, and the attention of the public.

Suppose today I should address an audience and say, "I wish every one in this room who is a Christian to stand up. But before you do this, it is only fair to tell you that this afternoon you will be burned alive." How many would get up? Nobody knows what he will do till the emergency comes. But what I do know is that every one who got up would be a Christian.

Today, so far from being dangerous or unpopular to be a Christian, it is a positive asset, a social advantage. So true is this, that any candidate for the Presidency of the United States, who should announce during the course of the campaign that he did not believe in the Christian religion, could not

be elected. I do not mean to accuse any candidate for public office of hypocrisy. But you will observe that the candidates attend divine service every Sunday, no matter how tired they may be.

All this is good, because it shows how strong Christianity is. But in its strength is the element of weakness.

Centuries after it ceased to be dangerous to be a Christian, it became dangerous to be anything else. Yet in prosperity the Christian church suffered from corruption. Finally, in the eighteenth century, instead of the church being attacked from without by torture and murder, the foe came from within—the increase of scepticism. The eighteenth century was more sceptical than the twentieth. The climax was reached in the French Revolution, when the Revolutionists abolished Christianity by law. The new Government said it was ridiculous to date history after the birth of Jesus, a person of no importance. The French Revolution was far more significant than Anno Domini. Therefore they changed the calendar, and I have at this moment in my house several books published in Paris in the last decade of the eighteenth century, which have the year of the French Revolution on the title-page instead of the year of Our Lord. But this governmental atheism injured Christianity no more than the old governmental persecution. Christianity thrives on open hostility. So today, when the Soviet government in Russia has abolished the Christian religion

in schools and the mention of it in books, Christianity is not hurt. Quite the contrary.

In order that the Christian Church may shake off its torpor and rise to its possibilities as a living force, it may be necessary in the immediate future for Christianity once more to become unpopular, as it was in the early days of persecution, as it was in the eighteenth century in France, as it is now in Russia. The average man shows love for his country by his willingness to make any sacrifice for it, even to the extent of yielding up his life. If religion is to be the vital force it ought to be, it must come first and not second in the life of every believer. If religion cannot come first, it need not come at all.

During the Great War, rightly or wrongly (I am merely chronicling a fact), the religion of Christ played second fiddle to the religion of nationalism. At the call to arms, Roman Catholics from America gladly butchered Roman Catholics from Austria; Protestants from Germany gladly killed Protestants from England. The vast majority of Christians put their country first, and their religion second. Yet if Christian believers all over the world should unite, war could be abolished today.

Will conditions continue as they are? Christians should always be good citizens—granted; but will they always render to Cæsar some things that belong to God?

Without attempting to tell any man what he should do, it is my belief that in the future Christian-

ity is once more to be tested. Instead of church-membership being a comfortable social asset, it is going to cost, cost horribly. When we see church-members giving money until it hurts, when we see them prouder of their church-membership than of belonging to any social club, when we see mothers prouder of having a son in the foreign missionary field than of having him at the battle front, then we shall see big things. Then the church will suffer from persecution and grow strong; then we shall see thousands leaving the church as rats leave a sinking ship; they will leave it because they are rats. Only the ship will not sink. Perhaps it was sinking because it carried too many rats. Once rid of them, the ship will outride the storm.



## X

### JUDGMENT

Wandering around the picture-galleries of Europe, one's attention is arrested every now and then by a painting of the Last Judgment. In most of the representations of this scene, horror triumphs over rapture. It was believed that comparatively only few were saved, hence the population of hell vastly exceeded that of heaven; and it was easier to excite interest by terror than by beauty. Whatever a scholar may think of the relative merits of the three parts of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, it is certain that *Hell* in the poem is more interesting than either *Purgatory* or *Paradise*, and that the depiction of torment made a sharper and deeper impression on the minds of readers (then and now) than any show of bliss. The greatest of mediæval hymns is the *Dies Irae*:

*Day of wrath, that dreadful day.*

In view of the then generally accepted belief that the majority of human beings were travelling toward eternal physical torture, and that their imagination of that unspeakable place was daily quickened by realistic paintings, solemn hymns, and eloquent ser-

mons, why did not Everyman do his best to avoid such punishment? One not versed in the stupidity and inconsistency of human nature would believe that in mediæval society there would have been no sinners, that men and women would have endeavoured to live in holiness. Alas, it was not so at all. If the breaking of the moral law were as audible as the breaking of a stick, the air would have been filled with the sound of the fracture of the Ten Commandments. With the admonitions of hell directly before them, there was plenty of cheating, lying, stealing, and profligacy.

Perhaps the reason that conduct and belief failed to harmonise was that the pleasures of sin were immediate and tangible, while the Day of Judgment seemed remote.

The majority of human beings lack the kind of wisdom expressed in the word Foresight. The lack of foresight indicates not only a deficiency in wisdom, but a deficiency in imagination. The future is certain, yes, but in contrast to the present it seems vague and shadowy. The man who borrows money receives cash on the nail; and in return he gives a piece of paper that cannot hurt him for a long time, and anyhow, a lot of things may happen before then. How many people who drive automobiles have paid for them? The salesman beguiles them by an "attractive proposition"; you pay only a little right down, and the rest in "easy payments" at comfort-

able intervals. Such a temptation is too much for the average man.

In the third chapter of the First Letter to the Corinthians, Paul attempts to persuade his readers into paths of rectitude by insisting that there will be a Judgment Day.

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble;

Every man's work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

*The day shall declare it*—Paul has in mind a special Judgment Day, when the accounts shall be opened, and all of us rewarded or condemned according to the value of our work on earth. Then shall all our deeds be submitted to the test by fire, and only things of permanent worth can survive.

Paul had in mind a special Judgment Day, but as a matter of fact most of us do not have to wait for that. There are in our earthly lives many days of judgment, many times when we are *tested*. If the result of this test is unsatisfactory, the victim often loudly complains that it is unfair, he did not know it was coming just then, he really is much better than this test has indicated, he wants another chance, etc., etc.

If one enters into a game, one must play the game

according to the rules. The game of life is the greatest game of all, and its rules may be ascertained. They are more clearly and definitely set forth in the Bible than anywhere else; and those who break them usually end by being broken.

Everything in national, political, social, and individual history tends toward a crisis, toward a test.

Lazy, idle, selfish and silly people hate tests, and with good reason. The test shows them up. There are many boys and girls at school who hate examinations, and many of their elders who wish to make education "easy" and attractive say that examinations should be abolished. I have been a professional teacher for thirty-six years, and while I recognise that there are imperfections in every system of examinations, I believe in them, because I can think of no better way to make a definite test at a definite time.

I believe in examinations not because I hate boys, but because I love them, and am anxious that they should not go out from school into the world untested. Furthermore, just as a fighting man rejoices in the day of battle, just as a man training for a race rejoices when the race comes, so I think those who have been honestly and industriously pursuing a course of study ought to feel something of the fighter's joy as they enter the room where the examination takes place. You have been enjoying the pleasures of school life, the association of friends, many interesting contacts, but here nothing can help



you. You stand on your own feet—how much do you know?

*Remember the surplus*, for in your day of judgment you will need it. Healthy growth always provides more than is necessary for the ordinary day's work. If one goes to bed every night for months completely exhausted, something is wrong. Either one is attempting a task beyond one's powers, or one is in such bad health that one is not fit to work. It is surprising how many of the parables of Jesus deal with the surplus.

When people shout today the word *preparedness*, they are thinking of guns, but Jesus was thinking and talking about moral and spiritual preparedness.

Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. (*An unusually high percentage of wise ones.*)

They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them.

But the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. (*Manifestly a good thing to do, in order to be refreshed. And as sleeping requires little exertion and forethought, the foolish in this respect successfully imitated the wise.*)

And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. (*The lamps of the wise had either*

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*been extinguished when they lay down to sleep, or they had now begun to use their extra oil.)*

But the wise answered,, saying, Not so; lest there be not enough for us and you; but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. (*I can hear it.*)

Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. (*Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*)

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. (*I don't know you! no denunciation can be so annihilating as that.*)

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

Many enemies of the church today delight to quote Jesus's denunciations of the Scribes, Pharisees, hypocrites, and apply them to church-members. But however wholesome this may be, we should remember that Jesus denounced not merely the leaders of the Jewish church, but the common run of humanity. Only a few of the parables are comforting; most of them are cruel. That is, they are cruel as life is cruel. Nothing is more cruel to a fool than experience. Nothing more cruel to a liar than the truth.

The significance of many of the parables lies in the surplus; in the complete preparation not for ordinary things, but for crises; not for fair weather, but for storms.

Observe that the foolish virgins took their lamps,

and apparently had them trimmed and burning; so that as the procession of ten girls moved along, it was impossible to distinguish the foolish from the wise. Sometimes the foolish look very wise: there is no solemnity like that of drunkenness. The difference between wisdom and folly in this instance was that the wise were prepared for an emergency; they carried extra oil. Had the Bridegroom appeared at an early hour, all would have been admitted. But it just happened (just my luck!) that the Bridegroom was late. That fact made all the difference; it showed up the ten women; it was a test.

The audiences that gathered to hear the preaching of Jesus resembled modern audiences. They were all alike in the capacity to hear; for God has given just as good hearing to idiots as to sensible men. The thing that separated the audience into two groups was the capacity to profit by instruction. Those who heard *and did* were likewise builders who built houses on rock foundations; those who heard *and did not* were like builders who placed houses on the sand. Let us suppose that the houses were equally good, though I doubt it. So long as there was gentle weather, all the houses seemed secure; but when the floods came, the house on the sand fell down; *and great was the fall of it.*

Why did Jesus add that last phrase? Because every irremediable calamity is impressive. It resounds and reverberates throughout the community.

Every wise and honest builder builds not for ordi-



nary, but for extraordinary occasions. What would be thought of an engineer who should build a bridge just strong enough to sustain the average day's traffic?

A professional prize-fighter, training for a contest, has one advantage over you and me. He knows the date of his judgment day. He knows the day and the hour when his resources of skill and strength will be put to the test; and even those who display little intelligence in other things have sense enough to prepare conscientiously for a fight. After the fight, we hear without condemnation the phrase, "He breaks training." How is it with us in the competition of life? In order to succeed or even to acquit ourselves respectably, all our education and energy will be needed—and what is most difficult, we do not know on what particular day we shall be tested. What is the conclusion? The conclusion is that we must be *in training all the time*.

Let us listen to the wise man, Emerson, on the theme

### TODAY

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year. No man has learned anything rightly until he knows that every day is doomsday. Today is a king in disguise. Today always looks mean to the thoughtless, in the face of an uniform experience that all good and great and happy actions are made up precisely of these blank todays. Let us not be deceived. Let us unmask the king as he passes.



A book that had a wide circulation fifty years ago was written by Sir Edward Shepherd Creasy, and was called "The Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World." (He ended with Gettysburg, but if he were alive today he would have to add the Battle of the Marne.) These were decisive battles because they settled certain things; their consequences were lasting and important. The heroes of these conflicts, although they made or added to their reputation in them, did not make their character there. That had been made in obscurity. We often say of some decisive event where one man stands out in a strong light, "That event was the making of that man." But it is not true; the event did not make the man; it revealed him. Why is it that whenever we think of the Presidents of the United States—and on the whole America has been fortunate—two, and only two, stand in a class by themselves? It is because Washington and Lincoln never put themselves forward, never loved themselves more than they loved their country; it is because they were of that extremely rare class of men who were never intoxicated by power, for the more power they received, the more disinterested they became; it is because their characters were equal to their talents; but above all it is because the severest scrutiny of their lives, from birth to high office, fails to disclose anything unworthy. They were not plaster saints, they were not marble statues, they were men, with the faults, limitations, and general streakiness charac-

teristic of human nature. But when the great crises came, these two men were equal to the situation, because they had been in training all their lives. In the years of obscurity, they were growing strong, and not weak; ripe, and not rotten.

Whenever today any man or combination of men seeks an individual for an important post, the seekers ask of those who know, Is he up to it? and the answer can be found in only one place—his past life.

Goethe compares life to a game of whist, where the cards are dealt out by an unseen dealer, and where it is left to us not to complain of a bad hand, but to do the best we can with what cards we have. When Professor Sumner wrote his *Life of Andrew Jackson*, he divested Old Hickory of all the glamour of sentimentalism, and placed on the title-page "Andrew Jackson as a Public Man. What he was, what chances he had, and what he did with them." He had no early advantages like Washington, granted; but what did he do with those he had? And on him the biographer turned the merciless microscopic light of historical research.

A. E. Housman has among his incomparable lyrics the soliloquy of a man about to be hanged. He curses his fate and the day he was born. But if we could look back over all the so-called minor events of his life, including his thoughts, we should probably find that his melodramatic departure from the world was a natural end to a logical chain.

The murder for which he was hanged may have been done in a moment of passion; but he had yielded to passion so many times in so many seemingly unimportant things, that at the crisis his passion had become ungovernable.

An American play that produced a tremendous effect was called *The Easiest Way*, and although the final fate of the heroine seemed so tragic that the audience nearly shouted in protest, every spectator upon reflexion was forced to conclude that it was inevitable. She had always taken the easiest way; and the easiest way had led to the hardest fate.

Many men at the tragic conclusion of a certain course of action, feel that if they could only begin life over again, they would be and act otherwise. Probably not. We should repeat the same faults. J. M. Barrie, in his play *Dear Brutus*, the title taken from Shakespeare's

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings,

has undertaken to show that out of a large company who actually have the chance to live their life over again, only one shows any improvement. Perhaps that is the reason so few would be willing to relive their lives; why should I be a fool over again?

I have not studied science sufficiently to express an opinion on organic evolution. But there is this truth in evolution—life is a development from what is, to what will be. *The future is in the present.*



It is impossible to detach or isolate any event either in the life of a nation or in that of an individual. One cannot explain the Russian Revolution or the Soviet State by studying only present conditions, still less by saying that Russians are madmen. However dreadful and tyrannical present conditions may be, the only way to understand them is to go back patiently in history and find out what were the antecedents. Every time the old Imperial Régime acted despotically and irresponsibly, it was preparing the Revolution. If you wish to understand the Reign of Terror in France, look at the history of France under Louis XIV and XV.

As I regard my college classmates at reunions, I cannot help reflecting how little our personalities have changed. We have all grown older, most of us have developed, but in only a very few instances is there a different kind of man.

Thus there are really no unimportant events; every little thing we do and *think* forms our character and our destiny. Is insistence on the rarity of change a counsel of despair? By no means; even if it were, that would not alter the facts. What we want is the truth, and even if we do not want it, we need it. The truth is that only a few men, after long ease and indulgence, succeed in reconstructing their character; but only a few men really succeed in anything.

It is depressing to see people take such pains with trivial matters, to be so anxious about unimportant



things, and take so little pains with their lives. The art of life is a difficult art to master, because there are so many details, so much routine, and routine cannot be made interesting unless it has a purpose, and the purpose kept in mind. It is easier to die bravely than to live bravely. The average man has so much vanity that he is usually fairly equal to a spectacular situation, where he can dramatise himself.

Heifetz plays the violin. Those who listen would be very glad to play so well as he, but even if they practised all their lives, they could not equal him; why not? Because he happens to be a genius. But even if his hearers could be assured of eventual equal proficiency, how many would be sufficiently persevering to pay the price he has paid? How many would be willing to give up their childhood, their youth, tennis, golf, college education, social pleasures, all the delights that make every day a varied round of agreeable events? Although Heifetz is a genius, his success is no accident. It resulted from daily, weekly, monthly, yearly devotion to a violin, practising alone, with no audience and no applause. Now the toil, then the victory. But toil comes first. And the chief reason that so few are victors is that most cannot endure the necessary uninteresting preparatory toil.

But during those long years of dull practice, Heifetz saw the future in the present; he saw the day when the concert-halls of Europe and America

would not be large enough to hold him. Hence drudgery was illumined by a vision.

Once in a long while one meets an American who can speak a foreign language fluently. Others look on with envy. But if they wish to approach his proficiency, there lies the dusty way through grammar, phrase-book, dictation, irregular verbs, and all the other unexciting and depressing details. Very few have the daily courage necessary to endure this toil. Even those Americans who go abroad to learn a foreign language, and stay there for years, do they succeed? Only a few. The majority return without the guerdon. Why? Because, instead of learning to speak French and German, they have been teaching their foreign acquaintances English. It was the easiest way, and they took it.

The successful University crew has only one day of excitement in the year: the day of the final race. In order to row well on that occasion, they have spent months of hard, uninteresting toil, before only one witness, who is chary of praise and fluent in correction. But ambition and the desire for victory have kept up their spirits during the tedious months of preparation. Eight months of hard work for twenty minutes of glory.

You see, in order to be successful in any undertaking, one must *connect the present with the future*, realise the meaning of the two words cause and effect. Percy Grainger was born in Australia; his mother took care of him every moment during his

babyhood, and when he was still a child, took him on the long voyage to Germany, supervised his education and practice, and went through obscure years of unremitting watchfulness. One night, in a crowded music hall, I sat in the audience with her; Percy Grainger had just finished playing a concerto, and he was bowing for the fifth or sixth recall. I turned to her, and said, "This is your reward, and you saw it coming."

To return for a moment to the opening paragraph of this sermon—the reason men's fear of hell was not sufficient to deter them from vice, was because the day of judgment seemed remote. Most individuals do not connect cause and effect. Why is it that in universities so many students loaf during their undergraduate days and work hard only in the professional schools? Because in the latter they see the connexion between work and wages, and in the former they do not. If they only knew! Now some do know; and they are those we hear of in later years.

In daily living, we must glorify the details, or they will be too much for us. How far will devotion carry a man? Millions of average men will follow the flag of their country into the valley of the shadow of death, cheering as they advance; thousands of men enthusiastically died for a cold-hearted, selfish man, Napoleon; millions have given their lives for all sorts of things, worthy and unworthy.



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In view of such facts, I would suggest that the best way to *make every day interesting* is personal devotion to Jesus Christ. We have a leader who not only overcame the world, but even death and the grave. Let us borrow from the soldier, courage; from the statesman, ambition; from the artist, patience; from the millionaire, perseverance; let us turn these qualities into service. A good character cannot be attained without the daily employment of all these elements. The reward is in the service; humdrum life becomes interesting; details are brightened; routine has a purpose.

Milton could not write his epic until he made the discovery that although God did not need him, he did need to work for God. There is neither great nor small; those who endure patiently and cheerfully may be accomplishing more than those who are famous.

God doth not need  
Either man's work, or his own gifts; who best  
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best.

About three hundred years ago, George Herbert, who had given up political ambition to serve God in a tiny village, expressed the art of daily living in a poem that will never be forgotten:

Teach me, my God and King,  
In all things thee to see,  
And what I do in any thing,  
To do it as for thee. . . .



All may of thee partake:  
Nothing can be so mean,  
Which with his tincture (for thy sake)  
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause  
Makes drudgery divine:  
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,  
Makes that and the action fine.

This is the famous stone  
That turneth all to gold;  
For that which God doth touch and own  
Cannot for less be told.

## XI

### ETIQUETTE

The best of men  
That e'er wore earth about him was a sufferer,  
A soft, meek, patient, humble tranquil spirit,  
The first true gentleman that ever breathed.

—Thomas Dekker.

Many years ago, when I was at Northfield, Massachusetts, I went out before breakfast to look at the mountains. I was thrilled by the glory of the summer morning, and when I came in to take my place at table, I turned to an old man sitting near to me, and exclaimed, "Have you been out this morning? It is a glorious spectacle! The mists are rolling off the tops of the mountains." To my astonishment he pulled a long face and said with sincere but nevertheless intolerable unction, "Yes, and I trust the mists will roll from many a sinsick soul today." Instead of being impressed, I was disgusted. The beauty which had filled my mind was somehow defiled. If the speaker had not been venerable, I should have told him exactly what I thought of him.

When I was a student at college, a stranger en-

tered my room one day and asked me if I were interested in the religious work of the Y. M. C. A. I told him I was deeply interested. "Then," said he, "may we not have a season of prayer together?" Well, I never refuse to pray with any one, for any one, or to be prayed for; so we got down on our knees, and had a season of prayer. But I was uncomfortable, and after the stranger had left, I felt as though I needed a bath.

Shortly after this unpleasant experience, my roommate and I were calling one evening on two sisters. We four young people were chattering, laughing, and talking harmless nonsense, appropriate to our years. Suddenly the girls' mother rushed into the room and sternly said, "This frivolous conversation has gone on long enough! Let us read the Bible together." Accordingly five Bibles were brought in, and we all read aloud in turn, two verses at a time. No one seemed cheerful, and I could judge of the embarrassment of the girls by my own sensations. Suddenly—everything was sudden with her—the mother turned to my roommate and asked, "Are you a Christian?" He instantly and emphatically answered "No!" Then the lady, after having somewhat recovered from her surprise at the unqualified negative, glared at me and said, "It is a great responsibility to room with the unsaved."

Now the old man who moralised on the mountains, the pious stranger who wanted a season of prayer, and the severe mother who brought in the

Bible, were all, in a sense, right. It is more important that the mists of sin should leave the heart than that the clouds should leave the mountains; it is more important to pray than to sit in idle meditation; the language of the Bible is better than the brittle conversation of youth. But—

If my own Christian faith had not been strong, it might have been injured by these attempts to improve it. I could well understand how such addresses might drive the unregenerate to alcohol or profanity. But I had sense enough to know that religion was finer than these crude representations of it. I do not despise Beethoven because of jazz, nor do I withhold respect from physicians because there are quacks.

Why, I had myself gone to Northfield purely for religious purposes. I went there to hear the two men—now with God—whose speeches helped me more than any sermons I have ever heard. These two men—apart from their Christian faith—were as unlike as two men could possibly be. One was rather short and almost incredibly fat. The other was tall and thin to emaciation. One had never known the advantages of learning, and often used bad grammar. The other had received a long and expensive University training, had travelled all over the world, and written scholarly books. One had been a salesman (I am sure a successful one), and had become an evangelist. The other was a pro-



fessor of geology. The two men were Dwight L. Moody and Henry Drummond.

Both of them were filled with the spirit of Jesus Christ and with the desire to impart it to others. But both also had a profound knowledge of human nature, and a worldly tact that would have done credit to King Edward VII. In other words, they were wise as serpents and harmless as doves.

Nothing is more important than for a sinner to become a Christian, nothing; but it is a mistake to stop a man who is running to catch a train and ask him about his salvation. He is likely to miss both.

Extreme earnestness and good manners seldom go together; the fact is unfortunate but nevertheless a fact. The reason is not far to seek. If a man is possessed by an idea or a conviction, its communication to others seems at the moment so primarily important that the method of presentation, consideration of the time and the place, and proper regard for the convenience of the listener, are alike forgotten. You might urge that in comparison with the seriousness of the message, the method of its transmission is of little consequence. But if the object of the speaker be something more than merely to relieve his own mind, if he wishes to *persuade* his listener, then effectiveness of manner demands attention.

When Jeremy Collier attacked the theatres of the Restoration, which deserved it as fully as many of our own, he attacked them with such savage bru-

talities that John Dryden, who manfully admitted his own sins, nevertheless replied, "I will not say, 'The zeal of God's house has eaten him up'; but I am sure it has devoured some part of his good manners and civility."

Paul said, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," which is true; but they are also corrupted by excess of zeal, or by a talent for the inopportune.

It is a pity that tolerance without conviction should often be more attractive superficially than conviction without tolerance. Cosmopolitan men of the world who are without faith either in politics or in religion, are often more polite and superficially agreeable than political Radicals and Christian Evangelicals.

Intense earnestness is likely to be lacking in art. A man ardently in love with a woman cannot converse with her so entertainingly as one who is fancy free. Perhaps the women are wise enough to make the proper allowances.

The novelist A. S. M. Hutchinson, who is absorbed in spreading the gospel, is not so brilliant a literary artist as Anatole France, who was entirely without religion and morality, who in fact had no principles at all.

Yet so far from manners being unimportant, they are in religion of enormous importance. A hermit's table-manners are of little consequence; but a minister or a deacon cannot present Christianity effec-

tively to the unconverted if he emphasises his remarks with a toothpick. That extraordinary novelist, Anzia Yezierska, who came to America as an immigrant, has shown that the chief reason which separates the children of immigrants from their parents is table-manners. You cannot draw people to you if you begin by disgusting them.

But manners are more than this. Manners should be the expression of the mind and heart. Manners imply consideration for others—and what is that but simply the application of the golden rule? And what is the golden rule but the essence of the teachings of Jesus? I say that conversion to Christianity should first of all show itself *in improved manners*. It is tragic that so many church members should be rude and even coarse in behaviour, especially in the home.

*Especially in the home.* Etiquette, like charity, and scores of other good things, should begin at home. We want no formal politeness between members of the same family; intimacy slays formality, as perfect love casts out fear. But kindness in little things, consideration for the feelings of others, a good example in self-control and moderation in speech, add prodigiously to the happiness of family life. Many fathers, who of course love their children, treat the delicate souls of their offspring more carelessly than they treat the mechanism of a Ford car. Indeed I believe, that if we could look into the melancholy history of all divorces, we should find



that often it was a lack of masculine etiquette that destroyed the love of a wife for her husband. The highest happiness on earth, which is found in cheerful and congenial family life, is lost more often by carelessness than by any other cause. And so too is the Kingdom of Heaven lost by carelessness. There is some truth in the cynical epigram, "A gentleman is one who never hurts another's feelings unintentionally."

Well, just as religious etiquette should express itself in the consideration we show to others in the thousand little things that make up life, so it is not impertinent or improper to speak of religious etiquette as shown toward God. For I am convinced that the distinctions between Christian sects and denominations today are largely a matter of religious etiquette.

Just as no church-member should permit an outsider or an unbeliever to be more honest than he is, so no church-member should permit, if he can help it, a sinner to have more attractive manners than he has. The more agreeable, interesting, and attractive you can make yourself, the more good you can do. It is unfortunate that tolerance should often indicate a lack of conviction, *but it need not*. It is unfortunate that people of intense religious convictions should often be intolerant, *but they need not be*. The art of life is difficult, but we can become more proficient than we are now. I am certain that it is possible to hold Christian faith tenaciously and



even fiercely, and yet be tolerant of other points of view, and of those who hold them. Is tolerance important?

Paul thought so. Forget the number of times you have read the thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, forget the sound of the words as they are worn by mechanical repetition, and read the chapter again, with due attention to every word. "The greatest of these is Charity." What did he mean? He meant that the greatest thing is sympathy not merely for the needs of others, but for their points of view, their mental attitudes, their minds, their souls, their personalities. To the true Christian, nothing is more sacred than the soul of a human being. If we cannot elevate it, let us not hurt it or debase it.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

Charity for another's mind is greater than pity for his needs. Charity for another's mind means understanding; it means that you are not handing him something down from your height, as you throw a bone to a hungry dog, it means that *you identify yourself with him*, that you take him on the same plane, that you give him back by your own unaffected sympathy the self-respect he may have lost.

Many eloquent speakers produce no effect because they do not understand their audience; many men in conversation produce exactly the opposite effect

from what they wish because they are not aware of the soul of him to whom they speak. In Hutchinson's admirable story, *If Winter Comes*, Mark Sabre was the ideal Christian because, without losing his own convictions, he always understood the opposite point of view and any one who held it.

Casual gifts to the poor and sincere consideration for others are examples respectively of what the man in the street means by Charity and what Paul meant by it. In John Galsworthy's play, *The Pigeon*, the vagabond says to his benefactor, "Without that, Monsieur, all is dry as a parched skin of orange. . . . But that will not trouble you, Monsieur; I saw well from the first that you are no Christian. You have so kind a face." There should not be anywhere a sufficient basis of fact to make this paradox strike home; but there is.

Elizabeth Barrett Browning has always seemed to me very near the ideal type of Christian, because she held an uncompromising Christian faith, with perfect Christian tolerance for other points of view. During her engagement to Robert Browning, she did what every engaged girl does at some time or another—she asked her fiancé what he thought about religion. And in order to find out, she told him frankly her own views. She said she could worship in any church or in any Christian society, Catholic or Protestant, ritualistic or evangelical. But she said she liked beyond comparison best the simplicity of the Dissenters, the unwritten prayer,

the sacraments administered quietly and without charlatanism. Wherever you go, she said shrewdly, in all religious societies, you find something to irritate and a good deal to bear with; but it is not otherwise in the world without; and within, you are reminded that God has to be more patient than we after all. She added that there was a good deal to dissent from among the dissenters; much "bigotry and ignorance."

For those who like the idea of Authority, and one historic church, hallowed by centuries of worship, for those who can believe in the Real Presence in the Communion, for those who love a beautiful and dignified ritual, there is the Catholic Church. The fact that there are millions who do love these elements and believe in them, is proved by the power of the Catholic Church today, by its steady and rapid growth, and by the converts of high distinction that it draws within its hospitable arms. For my part, although I am a Protestant, I rejoice in the growth of the Catholic Church—they worship the same God, they believe in the same Saviour. Instead of there being antagonism between Catholic and Protestant, there should be the heartiest goodwill, the strongest mutual respect and affection.

Now while there is one Catholic Church, there are inevitably scores of Protestant denominations. I say "inevitably" because the essence of Protestantism is individual judgment. In the old days, there was hostility between Protestant sects—it is a la-



mentable fact that Christian parties hated each other more than any of them hated the common foe of unbelief. Today things have improved. There is unity of feeling among Christians, and the only reason for the separation of sects is truly a matter of religious etiquette; not a difference in faith, but a difference *in form of worship*.

In small villages and in the organisation of foreign missions, Protestant denominations should unite, and show a united front. But in larger centres of population, it is really fortunate that we have every form of Protestant Christian worship, from the dignity of High Church Episcopalianism to the Salvation Army. Why?

So that every Christian can attend some church where, as Mrs. Browning said, his sympathies are least ruffled and disturbed, where the service elevates instead of getting on the nerves. Nothing is perfect, not even the superior critic; but in every city, there is no excuse for any believer who stays away from church. He can always find some place of worship that will be helpful.

Take the single question of the printed or the extempore prayer. To one brought up with a prayer-book, it seems incongruous and irreverent for a minister to stand, facing the congregation and deliver a prayer like a speech. But to one brought up without a prayer-book, it seems too formal for the most intimate form of communion—that between man and God—to be read out of a published



book. Is it not fortunate, therefore, that those who love the printed prayer can attend a church where it is used, and those who dislike it can go where it will not annoy them?

There are good Christians who are shocked by the language of Billy Sunday and by the methods of the Salvation Army. Well, they do not have to listen; they can go to a church where no such things are heard. But there are others who are saved—yes, *saved*—by Billy Sunday and the Salvation Army, whereas if they heard a white-robed boy choir and a priest in vestments, they would feel as if they were in a theatre. I believe in the variety of Protestant denominations; and as there are several million forms of sin, I see no reason why there should not be at least several hundred forms of worship.

“God has to be more patient than we after all,” said Mrs. Browning. If your refined senses are hurt by ignorant preaching, remember the divine patience. God must listen and even take it as a compliment!

Elizabeth Barrett’s letter to her lover showed that combination of conviction and tolerance which should be the hallmark of Christian etiquette. In replying to her, Robert Browning said she had spoken for both, that she had expressed his own instincts—instincts confirmed by reason. We observe then that both these poets, although Dissenters, had the understanding born of sympathy, to worship wherever Jesus Christ was held in honour.

This correspondence took place in 1846. In 1850 Browning published his poem, *Christmas Eve*, in which he definitely gave his own religious convictions. If one read only the first hundred lines of this work, one would certainly suppose it to be a satire on Christian belief and worship. The congregation in the small, stuffy, unlovely chapel are dull and dirty, stupid in mind, unattractive in appearance, and the long doctrinal sermon is intolerably commonplace. The visitor escapes into the night air, which he inhales with joy, and for a moment feels that he is nearer to God under the dome of the sky than under any church roof. But after a time, the approach to God through nature seems vague, and he escapes to St. Peter's in Rome. Here there is nothing to shock the æsthetic senses, as there was in the chapel; everything is gorgeous, grandiose, resplendent. Instead of the desire for beauty being starved, as it was in the chapel, it is almost cloyed with repletion. He escapes again, and this time finds himself in the lecture hall of a German university. Here there is no dogmatic ignorance, as in the chapel, and no splendour of superstition, as in Rome. It is a purely intellectual environment. The professor, a tall thin man—incidentally dying of consumption—is lecturing on the *myth* of Jesus. Browning soon escapes from this room, because while he found the air in the chapel close and bad, in the German lecture room there was no air at all!

In these four excursions—the dissenting chapel,

outdoor nature, the Catholic mass, and the university lecture-room—we find the four chief *attitudes* that are taken toward religion. The first is the simple, orthodox, evangelical worship, to be found today in thousands of Baptist, Methodist, Congregational, Presbyterian churches; the second is taken by those who will accept no creed, join no church, but feel a kind of cosmic emotion in communion with nature. They say that God reveals Himself to them through the stars, rather than through the Bible. There is probably more cant talked in nature-worship than in any sectarian religion. I have heard men say that they can get nearer to God Sunday morning on the golf-links, than they can in a stuffy church; to which I reply that on the links they certainly more often hear His name.

The third attitude is that taken by ritualists and sincere believers in a divinely ordained church, either with an inspired Head, or, as in the High Church Episcopal denomination, in a genuine apostolic succession. The service is beautiful and dignified, comforting and elevating. The fourth attitude is the familiar one of agnosticism or scepticism. The New Testament story is pretty, only it isn't true—it never happened at all.

Now the interesting thing is, that Robert Browning, after giving in poetic form a fair exposition of these four general attitudes, deliberately, positively, joyfully chose the first! There may be ignorance and stupidity in some small country churches, the

people may be lacking in culture and refinement, but they believe with all their hearts in the central truth of the Christian religion—in the divine, redeeming power of the Son of God. The bareness of the chapel, the absence of ritual, the poverty of the service, carry at least one advantage. Nothing gets between the individual and his God. It would be an error to say that the Puritans lacked imagination because they worshipped God in a barn. Their imagination was so boldly pictorial that they could sit in a whitewashed rectangle and clearly see the glories of the saints in heaven.



## XII

### SCIENCE

One evening, as I was walking about in Hyde Park, London, and listening to the competitive soap-box orators—I call them competitive, for each orator knew that the moment he became dull he would lose his audience to a rival—I observed some fifty yards away an unusually dense crowd. I wriggled through this to its core, and there I found two men engaged in heated debate. They were debating the question of Christian faith and scientific scepticism. The defender of the faith was a well-turned-out young gentleman in the early twenties, presumably a University undergraduate; his opponent, who proclaimed himself an atheist, was an old man, with white hair and beard. It was a rather unusual spectacle—Radical Old Age against Youthful Conservatism. Between them, a man who looked like the referee in a prize ring, held an open Bible, which the young man took and read from when he wished to convince the crowd; the old man did likewise, when he wished to read something which he asserted was incredible. Standing close to each contestant was a “second,” holding a lantern, so that its rays

would fall on the open book, from which the principals in turn cited their evidences.

Now it was clear to me that what drew and held the crowd was not their interest either in religion or in science. They were attracted as they would have been to a dog-fight; they applauded indifferently a good hit, no matter which of the two fighters made it. In other words, the only interest displayed by the group, so far as I was able to estimate it, was a *sporting* interest.

And as I finally turned away, and left the excited contestants arguing and quoting, the lantern bearers trying to throw light on the subject, and the crowd looking expectantly from one debater to the other, I reflected on the comparative futility of such methods of popular education. I believe that a public debate, so far as its value in the discovery and elucidation of truth is concerned, is not much better than a duel with pistols. Each of the contestants is set on defeating his opponent; the result is that when the affair is over, each man has more than ever before convinced himself, and has made no impression on the convictions of his antagonist. The crowd, whether they are spectators, or readers of a magazine symposium—even assuming that they are open to conviction, a large order—take more interest in the verbal skill of the duellists than in the question at issue. The only important thing is the truth—and truth fares hardly in such treatment. Truth cannot be found in the heat of combat, and

it is too elusive to be won either by the blows of force or by the rapier play of dialectic. If it can be found at all, it can be found only in solitary study, in unprejudiced meditation, or in impartial observation by unpredatory eyes. And even then, Truth is so shy that it will reveal itself only to those who would honestly rather find it than have their own views and wishes confirmed.

I doubt if any man has ever become a Christian by listening to a debate between religion and science; and I feel quite sure that such listening, no matter how amusing the struggle may be, has never produced an efficient scientist.

So far as I can discover, Paul did not feel that there was any ground for dispute between religion and science. He seems (I Timothy ii, 3, 4) to have stated in one sentence what should be the highest aim of all reasonable men. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.* If Our Lord is the Way and the Truth and the Life, the pursuit of truth should not lead us aside from the way. Religion concerns a man's soul, his personality; scientific truth is concerned with the development of his mind and body.

Religion and Science have no quarrel, and should never be placed in opposition. Each of the two has a foe so formidable that it is worse than futile to waste effort in civil war. The enemy of science is

Ignorance, the father of Error; the enemy of religion is Selfishness, the parent of Sin.

When Religion, no matter with what beneficent motive, attempts to control Science, the result is as unfortunate as when it attempts to control the State; and when Science attempts to control Religion, man loses the chief thing that raises him above the beasts.

Yet not for a moment do I believe that there can be a spiritual truth which is scientifically and demonstrably false. Let us feed no illusion to our hungry hearts. I don't believe in the value of anything that is only "allegorically" true; nor will I guide my life on any philosophy which says that although such and such a thing never happened we should believe and act "as if" it had. Truth is truth, everywhere and always, so far as Fact is concerned.

If I did not believe in the objective truth of the Christian religion, I should not waste any more time in going to church. And here I have good church authority on my side. "Never," said St. Thomas Aquinas, the thirteenth century philosopher, "can faith say one thing and reason another." In an interesting booklet, *A Comparative Study of St. Thomas Aquinas and Herbert Spencer* (1923), by Sister M. Fides Shepperson, I find

Aquinas and Spencer have in common the belief that there can be but one order of truth. The Revelation-truths can never be in conflict with the reason-truths—according to Aquinas. Religion and science, says Spencer, are as the outer and the under surfaces of a shield . . . if both have bases in the reality



of things, then between them there must be fundamental harmony. . . . Faith is good, says Thomas, but faith with *gnosis* (knowledge) is better. He who has only faith is as a child in the knowledge of God; he who has faith and the philosophy that supports faith is as a stalwart man. On this subject Clement of Alexandria says, "He who assents to the teachings of Christ and the Church, without striving by the aid of philosophy to give an intellectual basis to his assent, possesses faith, but he does not possess the *gnosis* (teachings of the Logos), which is to faith what the full-grown man is to the child."

Much as I admire the sincerity and Christian character of the late Mr. Bryan, I think he was deeply and dangerously in error when he said that the State Legislatures should control the textbooks and the teachings in the public schools. Members of state legislatures are authorities neither on science nor on education; and there can be no pursuit of truth unless the pursuer is free. If you shackle him, he cannot advance.

On the other hand, it is equally futile and dangerous for science to attempt to control religious teaching or to substitute itself for religion. Yet this is often urged today. In an address delivered at Commencement at a great eastern university in America a few years ago, a professor of science declared that in future science must take the place of religion. Such a remark showed an incapacity to understand the meaning of religion. It would be just as sensible to say that botany must take the place of music, and trigonometry the place of painting.

Arrogance is as repulsive in a scientist as it is in a minister of the Gospel. The former should have that unaffected humility accompanying the little known and the vast unknown; the latter's daily realisation of the disparity between him and his Master should annihilate pride.

I find that some Christian ministers today take opposing attitudes toward science, both of which seem to be capable of improvement. There is the minister who, when he thinks of the very word, science, sees red; he imagines that science is the Antichrist. Thus he closes his mind, is blind and deaf to what everybody else is seeing and hearing, and is finally incapable of any intellectual progress.

On the other hand there are some ministers who seem so anxious to placate scientists that they adopt what is almost a fawning attitude. They are in this bad shepherds, deserting their flock. I have read statements by ministers that the best revelation of God is in science. But to the loyal Christian there is only one supreme revelation.

Now while only a few scientists deny the existence of God, the Supreme Being revealed by science is a million leagues short of Our Father in Heaven. The god revealed by science is a Force infinite in power and (perhaps) intelligence, but quite devoid of any interest in humanity. There is not the slightest indication in the universe revealed by modern science of a god who cares for any human being, or

of a god with any moral or noble attributes. We cannot even use the masculine pronoun—all we can say is *It*.

The god revealed by a scientific study of nature was clearly, honestly, and pitilessly set forth by the late Professor W. G. Sumner, who made a profound study of the science of society. His biographer, Harris E. Starr, in stating Sumner's position, states, I think, the position which science—unaided by any Christian revelation—must honestly take.

Man is a piece of the earth. His relationship thereto is that of a part subordinate to the whole. Out of it along with other forms of life he has come. In conjunction with theirs his existence must be maintained. To the physical laws and conditions surrounding him, his well being requires that he properly adjust himself. From the earth, under the conditions it sets, he must get his means of subsistence. Toward him as he approaches her on the enterprise upon which his life depends, she turns a cold, hard face. There is no sentiment in nature, no predilection to serve man's interests. That she was made for him is true only in the sense that he may possess her if he can. Before her he has "no more right to life than a rattlesnake; he has no more right to liberty than any wild beast; his right to the pursuit of happiness is nothing but a license to maintain the struggle for existence if he can find within himself the power with which to do it." From her, moreover, he gets only what he extorts. Life is ever a struggle, not a feast of good things. There is no "boon" in nature, nor has there ever been. . . . He lives and grows if he is strong enough to conquer obstacles; if not, "then he may lie down and die of despair on the face of the boon and not a breeze, or a leaflet, or a sunbeam will vary its due course to help or pity him."



I have given this long quotation, because it is absolutely true so far as it goes; and the truth, whether welcome or not, is wholesome. Such is the god revealed by science, which is, in the religious sense, no God at all. Therefore if we really are to abandon everything in the New Testament that is called "supernatural," we should abandon prayer, worship, church-going, and buckle down to work, with the assurance that God does not even help those who help themselves, He being quite indifferent as to whether we sink or swim.

But if one compares that god, thus revealed by science, with the God revealed by Jesus Christ, we shall see there was some necessity for the Incarnation, if we are to come into any communication with the Infinite; and we must not forget how man has been aided in his struggle by *prayer*.

Science, as I understand it, does not make Christian faith impossible or unreasonable; science takes us as far as unassisted verifiable knowledge can go; Wordsworth and other poets saw more personality in Nature than the scientist sees; and a reasonable Christian faith sees even more than the poets.

I honour and admire all scientific men, who in sincerity, self-denial, and patient labour, are endeavouring to ascertain the truth. No Christian should ever be afraid of the truth, for we believe that God is truth. There are some Christian people who are afraid to take up the morning paper, for fear some scientist will have discovered something that will



destroy their faith. Fear not, little flock. Let them do their best—or their worst. They can never annihilate God, or the record of the life of Christ on earth.

Many people talk about the “history of the conflict between religion and science” as though science had been always right and religion always wrong. History, really, is the history of human effort, whether it is the history of politics, of science, of art, of religion. And the one thing certain about humanity is its uncertainty; not only its proneness to error, but its error. I believe the Founder of the Christian religion was divine; but I no more expect similar divinity in church-members than I should expect to discover that every private in Napoleon’s army had the brains of the leader. The Church is a human institution, like a political party; its nobility of aim, and desire to serve its Master, have not kept its members from the mistakes inherent in human nature.

But what is true of the history of the church is fully as true of the history of science. The history of science in general and of medicine in particular, is the history of error, quackery, fatal mistakes. Centuries ago, when a poor fellow was suffering from appendicitis, his scientific doctors consulted astrological charts; even in my lifetime, I can remember people suffering from tuberculosis who were shut up by doctor’s orders in closed rooms, so no draught of air should kill them. Doctors used to

bleed patients when such treatment made death more speedy. Shall we then scoff at doctors and at science because of all these errors? By no means. It was the imperfection of humanity, not the fault of science, that made these doctors do the wrong thing. It is the imperfection of Christians, not of religion, that causes them to err.

It is folly to give up religious faith because of some *alleged* discovery of science. To believe in Jesus and follow him, that is religion; to study the origin of the texts of the Gospels, that is science. Now suppose a man forty years ago gave up his faith in Jesus because a scientific critic declared—as some did then—that the Gospels were written several centuries after Christ died. Science has revised that opinion. Now there are scientific critics who declare that all four Gospels were written before 75 A.D. In adhering to any scientific discovery, *be sure and get the latest edition of the book*. The average life of any scientific theory is, I believe, about seven years. The life of Jesus is still potent after nearly twenty centuries.

I do not wish for a moment to take the cheap attitude of ridiculing science; such a position is stupidly unintelligent. I am merely trying to call attention to facts that are often forgotten, and to show that the sphere of religion cannot be successfully usurped by the sphere of science.

I read an excellent article sometime ago by a scientific man, Albert E. Wiggam. One sentence,

however, needs amendment. He is comparing the purity of science with the cruelty of religion, as shown in history:

In all its history science has never persecuted anybody. Throughout all history dogmatic religion and religion based upon authority have persecuted wellnigh everybody. But science comes to men with no blood upon its hands. It offers its ministry to men with a past as unsullied as the morning and with a spirit as fresh as youth and as tolerant as the sunshine.

Self-satisfaction, the "holier-than-thou" feeling, leads one into error as surely in science as in religion.

The word "tolerant" in that paragraph needs some revision. Some advocates of science love to represent ministers of the Gospel as intolerant, and scientific men as calm, tolerant lovers of truth. Now if the pursuit of scientific research produced no evil results either to humanity or to the researchers, such a position might be tenable. It so happens, however, that while scientific men are doing their best to invent monstrous engines of cruelty and destruction, ministers of the Gospel are preaching good will and charity to all. No blood upon the hands of science?

Take the recent World War. In 1911 I heard a German professor quote with fervid admiration this sentence of John Stuart Mill. "Any man whose fear of consequences is greater than his love of truth has no business to be a college professor." Well, what happened when the war broke out? Was there a



single scientific man in Germany who had the courage to prefer truth to national sentimentalism? Haeckel, who had always ridiculed sentimentalism in religion as opposed to the noble, self-sacrificing pursuit of truth, found himself stating that Germany was entirely right and not an aggressor. Where was his love of truth and where his sentiment then? Was there any prominent scientist in any country (except Bertrand Russell in England) who preferred the truth to nationalism?

And how about the ministers of the Gospel, who it is said selfishly prefer sentimentalism to cold truth? In Vermont, a Baptist minister, who declared that war was contrary to the teachings of Jesus, was sentenced to a Federal prison for fifteen years; in Los Angeles a group of ministers, for the same crime, were taken to jail; the Bishop of Utah lost his position. Many other cases could be cited.

From what class have come the martyrs for the truth? From the scientists or from the saints? Was Faber speaking of scientists when he wrote the tremendous words

Our fathers, chained in prisons dark,  
 Were still in heart and conscience free;  
 How sweet would be their children's fate,  
 If they, like them, could die for thee!

To read current comment, one might imagine that Christian priests and ministers were always persecuting scientific martyrs; but how many scientists



have died horrible deaths at the hands of Christians, compared to the men who have died for their religious faith? It is not science, but religion that can claim the noble army of martyrs. If the love of truth is evidenced by the willingness to die for it, it is religion and not science that can show the honour roll.

In the instances of war and other crises, I am not saying who is right and who wrong. I am talking about courage and the willingness to pursue at all hazards what a man believes to be the truth. It takes a test to prove men.

But let us have an end of the quarrel between science and religion. A religious man who loves the truth has the scientific spirit; and a scientist who sees not only the works of Nature but the divine element that gives them significance, has the religious spirit.

Science deals with man's origin; religion with his destiny. And in a truly hospitable mind, illumined by the sincere, unbiased love of truth and by the lamp of the Holy Spirit, the supreme thing is perhaps neither man's origin nor his destiny. *It is his opportunity.* No matter about our origin; let the dead past bury its dead; no matter about the future; the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. What shall we do *today*?

Scientific people and religious people should unite in the endeavour to follow and to discover truth, in the endeavour to alleviate human suffering, in the

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endeavour to destroy superstition—whether it is the quackery of religion or the quackery of science. In the early church there were many fakers, as there are today both among church-members and among physicians. Paul became rather impatient with those who insisted that they had the gift of “tongues,” which meant in practice that they usually talked an appalling amount of nonsense. He said, “I had rather speak five words with my understanding, . . . than ten thousand words in a tongue.”

There is this distinction between the modern advance of scientific thought and the modern advance of religious thought. Scientific men are quite rightly endeavouring to discover new facts, in other words to go steadily *forward*; whereas the best advance in Christian thought—that which is now clearly observable—is going *backward*; going back through the long ages of accumulated error about Jesus, to Jesus himself. Science must go forward to find perfection, which though it is in the future, will perhaps never be found. But Christians are fortunate in having perfection revealed once for all in the person of Jesus Christ. We do not need a new religion—we need to practise the one we have. Jesus lived on earth nearly two thousand years ago; in his ideas and teachings he is ten thousand years ahead of this present time.











